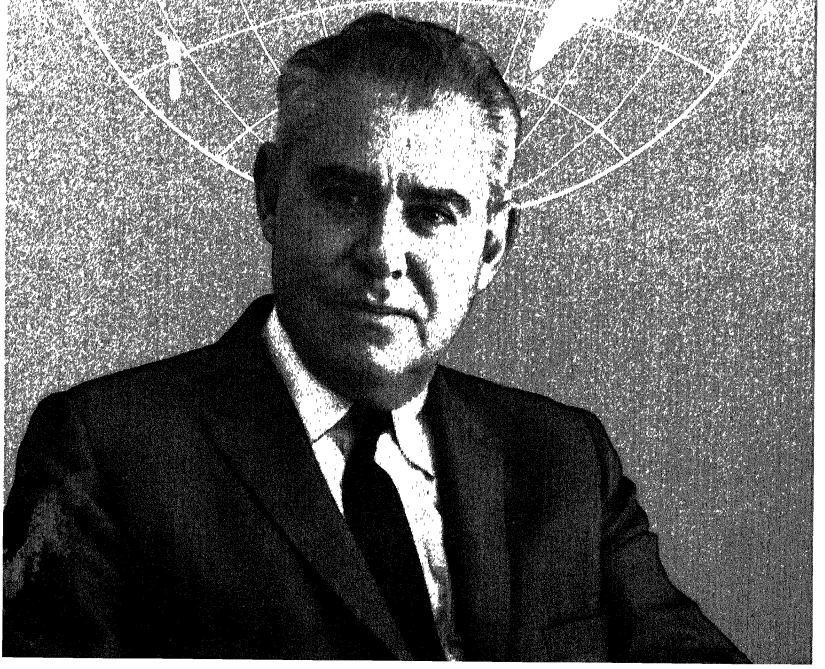
IRA HIRSCHMANN

Caution to the Winds



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Caution to the Winds

By Ira Hirschmann

IT IS NEARLY impossible to epitomize in a few words a life such as Ira Hirschmann's. Rarely in these times does a man exhibit such versatility: industrialist, publicist, pianist, diplomat—the range of his interests and activities is almost unlimited. From copy boy in 1921 at Bamberger's department store in Newark, he went on to become vice-president of Saks Fifth Avenue in the early thirties, and by 1949 his accomplishments in international affairs had won him the One-World Award. A trustee of the New School for Social Research, he was also founder and president of the New Friends of Music and the first to offer FM music to the radio listening public over the pioneering FM station, WABF-FM. In addition, he was a confidant of La Guardia and a member of his Kitchen Cabinet.

One of the most dramatic episodes in Mr. Hirschmann's career to date was his secret mission to Turkey for President Roosevelt to negotiate with Eichmann's agents for the rescue of

(Continued on back flap)

CAUTION TO THE WINDS

JUN 21 1963
PASEO

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REFLECTIONS ON MUSIC (with Artur Schnabel)

LIFE LINE TO A PROMISED LAND

THE EMBERS STILL BURN

CAUTION TO THE WINDS

by IRA HIRSCHMANN

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CAUTION TO THE WINDS

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To the memory of

My Mother

for her gift of

love and compassion

I believe there are times in everyone's life when a call for quick, positive, bold action is heard as clearly as Gabriel's horn. Answering this call requires instant forward movement without hesitation or time to consider the consequences. From such action the rewards have come in direct proportion to the risk involved, and only when I have thrown caution to the winds.

I. H.

Water Mill, Long Island
July, 1962

I am grateful to Milton Seldin
for his collaboration in the editing of this book.

I am also grateful to
Miss Ruth E. Trainor
for her unflagging interest
and tireless research.

Chapter I

I headed due north from Cairo to Cyprus. From there I was to double back at a slight angle eastward to Tel Aviv. All told I would fly 600 miles over the Mediterranean on an overnight detour to avoid directly crossing the border between neighboring states. It was typical of the technical state of war between Egypt and Israel that we had to go sideways before going ahead: nothing moved in a straight line.

As we winged toward Nicosia, the capital of British-held Cyprus, I mused over the anomaly of my own mission. After an extended interview with Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser in his home I was now heading for similar meetings with David Ben-Gurion and Moshe Sharett, Israel's leaders. I carried in my pocket an informal memorandum which reported the tone and content of my discussions with Nasser. This included what I thought could be "tests" of good faith leading to possible accommodations on both sides. Actually, I represented no one but myself, although by arrangement in Washington I reported my every move to the American Ambassadors in Cairo and Tel Aviv and to our Department of State. My hope to succeed as a peacemaker, or at least as an intermediary, was based on my conviction that the peoples of

Egypt and Israel needed peace more than their leaders could admit publicly. If some first steps toward mutual understanding could be achieved, I thought, then firmer ground could be found for the establishment of permanent peace in the Middle East.

A strange mission for the head of a radio station. But no stranger than so many of my adventures since I first left Baltimore some thirty-five years ago—twenty years old and eager to take on the world.

What made it possible for me, a young man with a passion for music, a love for the written word, and an apprenticeship in merchandising, to jump into municipal politics in New York where I was a virtual newcomer? And, not many years later, what emboldened me to accept and to carry out diplomatic missions of historic significance in the maze of Middle East politics in countries often known to me only through geography textbook acquaintance? For I must admit in retrospect, as I collect my papers and scan my scrapbooks, that I often wonder how and from where I summoned the courage to make many of the sharply veering moves that have characterized my more than three decades in business, politics, and diplomacy.

Not a clue, but certainly a constant factor throughout my life, has been my love of music. While not actually a tool, this has at times served as a necessary stimulus and often as a bridge—an abiding passion which has run like an obligato through my life as a background to my childhood fantasies and the recurrent theme, the leit motif, of my developing maturity.

I cannot accurately set a date when I first became aware of music: it was always there at our house. Indeed, the

center of focus of our family life was not the dining table or the fireplace, but a black upright piano, a Knabe, which stood in one corner of the parlor in our modest Baltimore house.

I can recall vividly an oft-repeated nocturnal scene of my early childhood. It took place in that same parlor. Leaning back in his chair, my father would relax after returning from a busy day in his store. My mother would unwind from the more strenuous exertions of caring for a family of seven children. The two of them would listen with obvious pleasure and quiet pride to my oldest sister, Florence, who, seated at the Knabe, would play the piano version of one of the Verdi operatic arias or one of the standard pieces that make up the repertoire of young piano students. It was a magical hour, usually after my bedtime, which no one enjoyed more than I did, curled up foetal fashion in my night clothes on the bottom shelf of the linen closet in the hall.

For all the members of our family it was almost as natural to sing as to talk. Endowed with good voices and secure pitch, we would burst into song whenever the spirit urged—around the dinner table, the piano, on the porch, from bedroom to bedroom, in fact any place where we foregathered. We seized any excuse to burst into song. The seven lusty voices, those of my sisters, Florence, Etta, Marion, Lillian, and my brothers, Alvin and Joseph, and mine, sometimes augmented by my mother's—and later by those of my brothers-in-law—kept the house ringing with vocal harmony.

My own love of singing was innate but restrained by the trained vocalism of my older sisters. So that when an opening occurred in the twelve-boy choir in our synagogue, I quickly applied and was accepted. For about two years during the winter months from the ages of fourteen to sixteen, at twilight on Fridays and on Saturday mornings, I participated

in the ritual led by the cantor, beautiful traditional melodies that enchanted me. I doubt if I ever understood the actual words in Hebrew, but the singing of the music filled me with joy and satisfied some welling need within me for expression. Later I sang in the chorus that George Castelle, a gifted vocal teacher from Russia, prepared for the opera he directed at the Peabody Institute. Here I learned the scores of *Aida, Pagliacci, Cavalleria Rusticana,* and a few other favorites. When the Chicago Opera Company came to town, I carried a spear (which I dropped) as an extra in *Aida.* To this day my wife, Anne, or friends who attend any of the standard operas with me do so at their own risk. The temptation to join in the chorus from my seat is always too great to resist. Carried away by the tide of the music, I tend to join the cast, singing and beating time, to the discomfiture of my companions and neighbors.

We were all encouraged to study some instrument, my four sisters and my two brothers and I. But it was made clear by Papa, ever the disciplinarian, that this privilege was ours only so long as we practiced diligently and could demonstrate progress in an occasional recital before the entire family.

No one had to urge me to study the piano. In fact, it was at my fervid request that Florence, a graduate of the Peabody Institute, became my first teacher when I was only nine years old. I have since studied under a number of teachers of varying competency and fame. Certain of them who played important roles in my life will emerge in this story. But I must at this stage express my gratitude to my sister for the patience and encouragement with which she led me through my early courtship of the piano. And there was Emanuel Wad, a later instructor at Peabody, a Danish import and a

bachelor who sported a long handlebar mustache. His charm and continental courtesy provided my first experience with old-world sophistication.

I was ten when my father took me to hear my first symphony orchestra concert. The great Boston Symphony gave a monthly concert in Baltimore, and I can still remember how, under their brilliant German conductor, Karl Muck, they played the Brahms *Symphony No. 3 in F Major.* Considered a complex, austere piece in those days, it started wheels turning in me that have never stopped. The sweep, the synchronous rise and fall of the strings, the constant ebb and flow of music in response to the imperious beat of the conductor carried me away to a new world whose horizons have never ceased to expand.

Another pivotal event involving my father, which may have had a bearing on my later life, occurred the following year. It was the National Convention of the Democratic Party in Baltimore's Fifth Regiment Armory in 1912.

Baltimore, a sleepy town southern in manner and pace, seemed to come magnificently alive during the convention. They were exciting days.

Conversations took new turns, bristling with famous names, colorful quotations from the speeches of William Jennings Bryan and the other flamboyant political figures of the day. The newspapers were filled with the convention news and my father, a daily visitor to the Armory, gave us at the dinner table his eyewitness account of the day's stirring events.

Completely enchanted, I begged my father to take me with him to one of the sessions of the convention. Luckily he acceded on the climactic day, and I had my first look at history as it was being made.

I can't honestly say that I was completely aware of all the ramifications of what I was witnessing, but I do know that I followed each poll of the states breathlessly. I listened to the drone of the chairman as he repeated the votes cast by each state delegation, and with my heart inexplicably pounding away at a furious pace, I tried to keep an accurate count.

Finally the deadlock between Bryan and Champ Clark, which had held the convention in a vise, was broken. A dark horse, the Governor of New Jersey and former President of Princeton, Woodrow Wilson, won the nomination.

This choice did not win my complete approval. Somehow, after being held spellbound by the grandiloquent oratory of the heavy-maned William Jennings Bryan, the scholarly and austere visage of Wilson seemed to me an anticlimax. So I was somewhat appalled and began to have my first doubts about my father's infallibility when later that evening he pointed to Wilson's picture in the *Baltimore Sun* and announced to the assembled family, "This man will be the next President of the United States."

After Wilson's election, Papa, to whom I had always looked as a source of wisdom, reached new heights of heroism in my eyes—hero and seer rolled into one. And my bloodstream was invaded for the first time by the political bug, a virus that was to lead me in and out of countless scrapes and high adventures in the years to follow.

It would be difficult to say that I had actually inherited my restlessness from my father. It is a fact, however, that he was a man who refused to stand still. Even the many advantages that were his when he came here from Riga, as a seventeen-year-old boy only served to frustrate him. Before migrating, he had been an apprentice with an important textile merchant in Riga, now the capital of Latvia. According to the

custom of the times, he had lived for four years in the home of his millionaire employer. His many fringe benefits included a fine secondary education which meant training by a tutor in English and other languages. As a result, Papa considered his first business in America, a small men's clothing store, a mere steppingstone. After this venture became prosperous, he was still far from satisfied. I do feel, however, that as he continued to move up the scale, eventually to become a banker, my father, or "A.B." as he was known in Baltimore, began to take pride in his achievements.

It was always taken for granted, that is by everyone but me, once I reached my teens, that I would follow in his footsteps. I must admit that as a young child the store fascinated me. When I was barely big enough to see over the counter tops, I was permitted to make my first sales. Collars, the real hard ones, were my specialty.

It wasn't long before it became clear that I couldn't maintain interest in the routine of a store and its merchandise. I would perk up only when some innovation would appear, a novelty that presented a challenge to my imagination. But one aspect of my early training under my father's tutelage later stood me in good stead. "A.B." was known for the provocative advertisements he ran daily in the personal columns of the *Baltimore Sun.* He wrote his own copy as well as clever window cards and signs.

There was an amusing sidelight to this phase of my training. I believe it was supposed to have something to do with "building my character." My father used to write his ad copy on the unused inner side of envelopes, which he would slit open with a large paper cutter. It was one way of demonstrating what he considered to be the cardinal virtue—thrift. It might even have had a salutary effect on me if he hadn't

repeated over and over with a striking lack of originality, "Save your pennies and the dollars will take care of themselves." Without attempting to pose as an expert on child training, I can report somewhat ruefully that this admonition had an effect directly contrary to its original purpose. Maintaining a balance between income and outgo has been a lifelong problem.

My mother was a woman of great compassion. Her love and understanding helped bring some harmony into my life when it seemed to be deteriorating into a routine of daily frustrations. But with seven children, four of them male-oriented girls, she was preoccupied beyond her capacity to give each of us the individual attention we thought we deserved. And to be the sixth in line had many disadvantages. I was caught somewhere at the lower middle end of the scale of family importance—a kind of child's no-man's-land. I was young enough to be in the way of the older kids and, in turn, I was short-circuited by a young brother, Joseph, complete with golden curls, to whom went the lavishment of affection due the baby of the family. I lived in an isolated world, a dream world around which I built a shield of fantasy to neutralize the imagined rejections. I was rich in plans for the days when I would be independent of family restrictions and would be free to escape into a world of my own choosing. I have been able to make some of these dreams come true.

In my senior year at high school, the founding of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra was a turning point in my life's interest. A limited number of tickets were put on sale for twenty-five cents each at 7 A.M., perhaps twenty city blocks away from our home. Never an early riser, the lure

of these concerts was a sure-fire alarm clock: I rarely missed a concert.

My extra nickels and pennies were saved mostly for the occasional concerts that came to town. But it was the 4 P.M. concerts on Fridays at the Peabody Institute that served as the base of my music education. As part of the Peabody curriculum, leading artists appeared each Friday afternoon in the small, compact, intimate Peabody Concert Hall. Here I was exposed to the basic music literature by such artists as Harold Bauer, Ossip Gabrilówitsch, Elena Gerhardt, Alma Gluck and the Flonzaley Quartet. I lived for these Friday afternoons. The days of each week were counted toward Friday, for the boredom of the week's school days would end, crowned by golden hours of music, to be followed by the Friday night Sabbath dinner, the most relaxed and festive evening of the week. I can still see the table with the candles that my mother lit with a ritual prayer. It was often set for as many as twenty people, including at least two grandparents as well as friends and relatives.

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra also gave Rehearsal Concerts in the assembly halls of the city's high schools. I remember the principal pieces of the first concert at our school, the *Overture to Tannhäuser* and the Beethoven *Fifth Symphony in C Minor*. I have since heard the *Fifth Symphony* played many times by major orchestras here and in Europe under leading conductors. But the impact of this first performance by the embryo orchestra has never been duplicated for me. These free concerts which were made a part of the curriculum for high-school students left a lasting impression with me. The idea occupied an important position among my dreams for my future. So it followed that in later years I was happy to provide similar concerts in the

New York City high schools with my own New Friends of Music Orchestra under the direction of Fritz Stiedry, with Mayor La Guardia acting as intermission speaker.

Throughout my high-school days I continued with my music studies and I was given the honor of conducting my graduating class in the singing of the class song. We were so enthusiastically received that we were called on to repeat it. Although nervousness gripped me on the speaking platform as a debater for the school literary society, I was completely at ease with a baton in my hands. Conducting was natural for me, and I have often reflected that some recognition of this aptitude or some fortuitous turn of fate at that time might have taken me permanently into the music world as a conductor.

During my last year in high school I was stricken with a ruptured appendix. It had hit me while I was playing lacrosse, even today a major sport in Baltimore. My extended stay in the hospital was a period which I enjoyed mainly because of the attention shown me by all the factions of the family, especially my mother, but also because I was able to sort out my many thoughts of escape to the world outside of Baltimore.

It was from my hospital bed that I directed my first campaign against the "authorities." Richard Uhrbrock, the assistant principal at Baltimore City College, acting during the illness of Wilbur F. Smith, the principal, at our school, had aroused a mounting storm of indignation by his tyrannical disciplinary tactics. His highhanded methods had become increasingly unendurable, and during my illness a few of the students decided to take some action. Since the boys, led by my pal Mickey, visited me daily while I was recuperating, my bedside seemed as good as any other place for a council

of war. I don't know who it was who suggested a strike, perhaps it was I, but before the meeting was dispersed by the nurses, rebellion plans were fully drawn.

The boys had a gigantic sign painted with the slogan "Down with Dick," which they hung on the front of the school building the night before the strike. Situated on a major thoroughfare, at Howard and Franklin Streets, the sign drew enormous crowds, blocked the traffic and made a perfect news picture for the front page of the *Baltimore Sun*. Although their leader was far behind the lines, in a hospital bed, the young strikers carried out our bedside plans perfectly. Rebels were planted at all corners and doors to block the entrance. By nine o'clock thousands of students were milling about, responding to the cheer leaders' "Down with Dick" which echoed through the streets.

I lay in bed counting the minutes following the timetable agreed upon by the committee. That afternoon Mickey dashed into the hospital waving the front page of the paper with streamer headlines, reporting complete surrender by the authorities. The Superintendent of Schools, with a near-calamity on his hands, called in the committee of students headed by Mickey, heard their complaints to the end and was obliged to accept the "terms" we had laid down for the removal of "Dick" as acting principal, and the reinstatement of certain students who had been suspended by him. In ensuing years I have been involved in many protest groups, sometimes as a leader. They ranged from small groups of dissenters in private apartments to giant rallies in Madison Square Garden. But none has given me such satisfaction as the rebellion of my Baltimore schoolmates directed from my sickbed in 1918. While this may have been youthful high jinks for most of my co-rebels, perhaps their only experience

of this kind, for me this was basic training for "fighting City Hall."

There can be no doubt that my chief interest in my teens was music, and a musical career stood high in my dreams of the future. But my future had already been decided upon in the family's higher councils. I was to be a businessman, and I entered Johns Hopkins University as an economics major.

Looking back at this painful period of my early development, it is difficult to maintain the detached attitude I have assigned myself. Flashes of the old turbulence come back like the distant thunder of a storm that has struck and moved on.

As I have indicated, my father was of the old authoritarian school. A man of considerable intelligence and ability, he nevertheless could not understand that his children might have ideas of their own about a number of things, not the least being their own future. Father loved music and enjoyed our musical studies, but the thought never occurred to him that this could be anything but a hobby or avocation subordinate to the principal function of building one's business sinews for future security. And in this he prevailed.

It would be impossible for me to define the immediate source or form of my rebellion, but it came to a head during my abbreviated career at Johns Hopkins University. I am probably being unfair to the school which has turned out so many fine distinguished graduates, but the curriculum just didn't hold my attention. Except for geology—in which I had discovered a surprising interest—and the economics courses of Broadus Mitchell, I attended classes as rarely as the rules would permit and those classrooms I deigned to visit with fair regularity were the scenes of much daydreaming. I managed to pass, but certainly without distinction.

Politics held my interest from the start. Woodrow Wilson was an illustrious graduate of Johns Hopkins, as were Newton D. Baker and Walter Hines Page. I took great pride in this association and followed their careers more closely than did most young men.

When Harding, a patent mediocrity, was elected President, I was almost ready to leave the country; and when he died I interpreted Coolidge's accession as near doom.

I absorbed every piece of reading material dealing with politics I could get my hands on, beginning with a salty diet of H. L. Mencken and Frank Simonds—the two ranking political writers in the Baltimore press. For the most part, I didn't read much fiction, although I was caught in the reforming fire of Sinclair Lewis, Upton Sinclair, and the other "muckrakers."

My courses in economics and my reading in politics caused some difficulty unforeseen by my father, who had thought of these subjects as essential to training for a business career. I was introduced to the utopian planning of traditional socialist thought by Broadus Mitchell, a fiery individualist who leaned heavily on the teachings of Karl Marx. I can still recall my father's horror when, fresh from a session with Mitchell, I visited him in the formal office of his bank and protested against the parasitic role that modern capitalists were playing in human society.

I was restless in the classroom and found more interest in my part-time job as a copywriter at the Hub, a Baltimore department store. And I continued to revisit the "castles" of my old childhood dreams.

Mickey, my co-conspirator in the strike at City College, continued to be my closest friend. It was he who brought me my first glimpse of the world outside Baltimore when he

reported the startling news that his father was taking the whole family out west to the oil fields of Texas.

What pictures of romance and high adventure went through my imagination! Mickey and I vowed that Texas would be the world that we were to conquer. He promised to let me know when and where his family settled and even to line up a job for me.

It took a couple of years, but Mickey lived up to his end of our bargain—even to the job. Amazingly, a means presented itself for me to reach this promised land. Samuel J. Keiser, the husband of my sister Etta, had accepted an assignment to head a fund-raising drive in, of all places, Dallas. All my powers of persuasion were brought to bear, and I was soon on my way westward, twenty years old, with an assistant's job and plans for desertion.

I joined Mickey, but the job of reading and recording the output figures of an oil well did not live up to my dreams of big doings on the Texas plains. I made a few tentative job-hunting probes out there, but, swallowing my disappointment, I soon went home.

But the break had been made. I never returned to school and was able to take my first full-time job as copywriter for the then young Joseph Katz Advertising Agency in Baltimore. And for a while, with the expansion of my personal independence, an intrinsic by-product of my growing pay checks, I came to peace terms with myself. But this stage was to be of short duration.

During this period of change I continued my piano studies with Virginia Costella of the Peabody Institute and attended whatever concerts the town offered. Then I had the chance to visit New York for the first time. It was an experience from which I have never quite recovered. I walked up and

down Broadway and stared in wonderment at the buildings, the spectacular signs, the theatres, the tempo of the traffic, the vitality of the people. As for the musical world, it was endless musical fare every single night at Carnegie Hall, the Metropolitan Opera House, Aeolian and Town Halls.

There was no escaping it. Music was still my love. I had to leave Baltimore for New York if for no other reason than to continue my courtship.

Chapter II

In any so-called celebrity interview one may read or listen to, there inevitably arises the same tired, banal question, "What was the big factor in your success, was it luck or timing that gave you your big break?" I can testify, without being asked, that luck provided a slight aperture, but it took a decided push from me to transform this into a sizable opening, an opportunity for me to make the big jump from the provincialism of Baltimore to the cosmopolitanism of New York City and the world beyond.

Samuel Keiser, the same brother-in-law who had taken me to Texas, appeared at our house one night and announced that he was going to New Jersey to direct a campaign for the Joint Jewish Relief Committee. This didn't awake any response in me, but when he casually remarked that the committee's chairman was Felix Fuld, one of the owners of the Bamberger Store in Newark, my thought processes went into high.

The name, Fuld, as head of the committee, was enough for me to offer to quit my job at the Katz Agency and go to Newark with Sam. And, once having overridden the objec-

tions of my parents, my offer was accepted with the proviso, of course, that Fuld would accept me.

My introduction to Fuld could hardly be called auspicious. We arrived at his office early the following Monday morning. In short order we were called into his office. My brother-in-law then outlined his plans for the campaign. This took a half hour during which I seemed to have blended into the decor of the room: no one took notice of me, I thought. But as we rose to leave, Fuld asked: "Who is this young man?"

"My brother-in-law," answered Keiser, "and a capable publicity man."

"Looks too young," Fuld snapped and walked out of the room.

But he hadn't said no. Keiser made my appointment official.

After two months of intensive preparation and just as we were approaching the peak of our drive, Keiser had to return to Baltimore because his daughter became seriously ill. It was necessary for me to take over.

Typical of most campaigns of this sort, it was to reach its climax at a gala dinner. This had already been scheduled to be held at the Robert Treat Hotel in Newark, and Fuld had arranged for the illustrious Rabbi Stephen Wise to be the speaker of the evening. Some six hundred community leaders and principal donors were expected to attend. Fuld asked me to submit a program for approval by the committee.

This was my chance to impress Fuld; I decided to do something dramatic. Some weeks before at a friend's home in New York I had heard a contralto sing a moving song in Hebrew which opened and closed on a high "G" with the Hebrew word *Rachem*—mercy. A moving piece, it reflected the suffering of the oppressed, and when sung with the

passion inherent in the music, it couldn't fail to stir the emotions. I phoned Rabbi Wise and asked if he could build his appeal to a climax and end on the word *Rachem.* My plan then called for all the house lights to go out except for a spot which would pick up the singer's face as she would echo Wise's last word, *Rachem,* and continue the song to its end. Wise, a showman in his own right, readily agreed.

Fuld did not share our enthusiasm. He thought that the sudden darkness might create a panic in the hall. I realize that today I would probably be in agreement with him. But forty years ago in my youthful enthusiasm and blind confidence I never thought of questioning my own judgment. I ignored the decision of my boss and went ahead with my plans.

Protocol called for me to be seated with Mr. and Mrs. Fuld and the other members of the committee and their wives. Somehow I managed to avoid Fuld's eyes when, during Rabbi Wise's address, my singer and her accompanist quietly took their places at a piano in a small balcony high above the audience in the rear of the room.

Wise's innate dramatic sense came fully into play as with all the power of his vibrant bass voice he thundered his passionate words. Despite an inner queasiness as I felt Fuld's eyes drilling into me, I was as thrilled as anyone in the hall when the long-maned Wise spread his arms wide, held out his open-palmed hands in supplication, and with measured beat poured forth his peroration, "Give us mercy—*Rachem.*"

The electrician could not possibly have timed his moves any better nor could the singer have hit a high "G" with any greater clarity and passion. As one, the audience turned to face her and, almost as if they had been subjected to mass

hypnosis, froze into immobility as she sang the mournful but courageous words, ending again on *Rachem*—mercy.

When the lights went up, the hall rocked with applause. The members of the audience exploded in a sudden release of their pent-up emotions. And, most important, the money rolled in.

Only at the end of the meeting, after the last tally of funds, did Fuld speak to me. In typical clipped phrases, he said: "You had your nerve, young man. You are lucky that it worked. Congratulations."

My personal campaign to win Fuld's approval had succeeded. The drive over and a big success, Fuld called me to his office and offered me a job in the Bamberger Store. He suggested that I work in merchandising, where, as he said, the big money was. But I yearned for the more creative atmosphere of the advertising department, a career I wasn't totally unprepared for. A place was found for me as a production assistant, the low man on the department's totem pole, at a salary of twenty-five dollars a week.

I drove a hard bargain with my first landlady in Newark. She was to provide breakfast, limited to one egg a day, with my tiny hall room for the inclusive rate of ten dollars a week. So I could hardly blame her for expressing amazement when a piano was delivered to my room the day after my arrival. I had purchased it for twenty dollars in a secondhand store I discovered on my first lunch hour.

It was an upright piano, but it did take up a great deal of my closet-like room. It was convenient, however, in that all I had to do each morning when I awoke was to sit up in my cot and swing my feet over the side next to the piano to be in position for my daily practice period. There was no room for a bench or chair.

A year later when I made a move to a furnished room in New York City, I left the piano in the custody of my former landlady. And there it rested for two years. At that time I was living with a family on Washington Square, one of whose prime assets in my eyes was a Steinway grand piano. Among the other lodgers in the house was a charming woman, Mabel Leslie, the secretary of the Women's Trade Union League. These wonderful ladies, including Eleanor Roosevelt, Nancy Cook, Frances Perkins and others, were fighting for better working conditions for women. Mabel tried to prevail upon me to attend one of the League's Saturday night dances at its Lexington Avenue headquarters. I refused her invitation on the grounds that I couldn't stand the sound of their old scratched records on an equally beat-up phonograph. She agreed that the music fare was poor in quality and sighed, "If only we had a piano."

Suddenly, inspired, I blurted, "Mabel, I'll give you a piano."

She thought it was a grand joke coming from a twenty-three-year-old, and I had difficulty convincing her that I really meant it. All the League would have to do, I assured her, was to have it delivered from Newark. Once this was accomplished, I deigned to attend its Saturday night baptismal performance. And with all the dignity that my munificence could support, I gravely danced with Mabel and the other members of the League.

The Bamberger Store reflected the imagination and resourcefulness of its executive head, Felix Fuld. He was a natural leader who inspired his staff to an amazing degree of effectiveness in their daily battle against the overweight competition of the big New York stores. A prime weapon in the

Bamberger arsenal was its advertising. Every Sunday in *The New York Times* their ads would appear side by side with the smart Fifth Avenue shops and the colossi of Herald Square. Ideas were bold, copy was sharp and layouts brilliantly imaginative. I couldn't possibly have chosen a finer mentor, or a better store in which to serve my apprenticeship.

My principal function at Bamberger's during this early period was to make the final corrections on the proofs of the newspaper advertisements. It brought me into direct contact with nearly every department of the big store and also took me to the composing rooms of the newspapers where I received sound training in typography, which proved invaluable in later years.

Copywriting was still my goal in those days and I pestered the members of the writing staff to let me do bits of copy, the leftover items for the less important departments. Basic material for these ads was submitted by the buyers who gave us descriptions of their wares on yellow sheets of paper. I can still see the words that were to direct my life into new and unforeseen channels scrawled in soft pencil across the face of one of those yellow pages, "Wireless Sets with Earphones."

Intrigued and not certain as to what a wireless set was, I went down to the department that had them for sale. By working the knobs carefully and listening intently with my earphones I was able to pick up the weak signals of WEAF. Once I heard the tinkling sounds of piano music I was able to wrest from this mysterious box, my imagination was on fire.

From that day, I never stopped speaking of the myriad possibilities of broadcasting for Bamberger's. The most tell-

ing of my arguments which finally won Mr. Fuld's permission to apply for a license was that this would enable us to reach into the homes of northern New Jersey's suburbanites who did not get the Newark newspapers. This had been a major problem and radio seemed to offer a solution.

Obtaining the license was a simple matter in those pre-FCC days. The sole arbiter was the Secretary of Commerce, an office held by Herbert Hoover at the time. A few forms were filled, a few letters written, some questions answered and a new radio station was born—WOR.

I remained in the store's advertising department in a series of jobs, eventually becoming the manager. I never actually managed the radio station, but my involvement in its policy making was an integral factor in WOR's development. The station's advocates in the Bamberger management were hard-pressed to justify its continued existence in those early days, since commercial advertising had not yet invaded the broadcasting business. For years it operated at an approximate annual loss of $150,000.

At twenty-one I had been a copywriter for less than a year when I was called in by Walter Moler, the advertising genius who was responsible for the store's brilliant public image. He appointed me advertising manager of the new Basement Store about to open. The only reservation the owners had expressed, he told me, was my youth. Their concern, it seems, was not with my actual age but with my boyish appearance.

As a prerequisite of acceptance of the job, Messrs. Bamberger and Fuld had stipulated that I must promise to raise a mustache, a fiat they lived to regret. My mustache sprouted in all directions, and worse still, in several shades of brown, blond and even green-gray. The management, in full retreat, pleaded with me to shave it off at all costs. To this day, even

when ill, I refuse to let anything more than a light fuzz gather on my upper lip.

Before taking over as advertising manager I was sent on a tour of inspection of the principal Basement Stores in the major cities of the country. I was to make an inspection of their store layouts and advertising methods.

My subterranean study was to take me through the West and end at the model of all stores, Marshall Field & Company in Chicago. For a young man with the travel bug in his blood, these train trips meant adventure of the highest order. I relished every moment of them.

Arriving in Chicago, I phoned the general manager of Marshall Field, who made an appointment for me for that afternoon. Eager to get a view of the city, I took a bus from the Drake Hotel on Lake Drive. About halfway downtown, my eye caught a sign on a big old building, "Symphony Hall —Today 2:30—Brahms Third Symphony."

In a wink I was off the still-moving bus and was at the ticket window. The man behind the cage informed me in icy tones that the concert had long been sold out. Without batting an eye, I asked to see the manager of the orchestra. The starting bell was ringing as he was pointed out to me, standing majestically at the door surveying the eager rush of the lucky ticket holders to get to their seats. I introduced myself, told him that I had just come from New York and that the main purpose of my visit was to make a comparison between the quality of the Chicago orchestra under Frederick Stock and the Philadelphia Symphony under the challenging, upcoming Leopold Stokowski, and that I had not realized that tickets would be at a premium.

The manager was just about to brush me off when he turned to greet a dignified lady, to whom he bowed obse-

quiously. After a few moments he said: "This young man is from New York. He has some vague notion that the Philadelphia might be put in a class with our orchestra and has come to compare them. How ridiculous!" he said, turning his head superciliously. "Of course, there is not a ticket in the house." The lady turned to me graciously, introduced herself, invited me to sit in her box with her friends. There I spent a most relaxed afternoon at a sterling performance of the Brahms Symphony, seated with the wife of the Chairman of the Board.

At the end of the symphony, I was ready to swear by all that was holy that the Philadelphia could not hold a candle to the eminence of Chicago's orchestra, and I said so in my most enthusiastic prose. I was invited to join my benefactress at her home for tea with her friends.

It was past six o'clock when a chauffered limousine deposited me in front of the Drake Hotel. I must ruefully confess that not until that moment did the broken appointment with the manager at Marshall Field's enter my thoughts. Worse still, I was scheduled to leave Chicago that night on a sleeper, so I never got to Marshall Field's. How I explained it away or covered up my omission of this key visit in my report I cannot at this time recall. But I would hesitate to offer this as an example to the younger generation on "how to make good."

After several years I was promoted to manager of all the Bamberger store advertising. And I must say I was given full support and complete freedom to test my abilities in developing new ideas.

History of a sort was made with one unusual institutional advertisement, a full-page ad in *The New York Times,* welcoming home Charles A. Lindbergh from his valiant solo

flight across the Atlantic. My art work consisted of two sweeping lines which formed a stylized pair of eagle's wings. The copy consisted of the words, "Welcome, Lone Eagle," and in one corner the Bamberger slogan appeared in small type, "One of America's Great Stores." I believe it is still the only instance of a department store running a large advertisement and deliberately leaving out the company's name. (It has happened to me and others *by accident.*) Again, to the credit of the owners, who never even saw proofs of the store's ads, I was given wholehearted support in my expensive experiments with subtle propaganda.

Not only did I gain some artistic—if I may use the word—satisfaction from this simple dramatic institutional gesture, but it served as a measure of my enthusiasm for Lindy's feat. For it must be recorded that I have been an aviation buff ever since my childhood. This dates back to my fourth or fifth year when I was one of the thousands who flocked to Baltimore's rooftops to witness an early flight of one of the Wright brothers (I think of them as interchangeable) over the city.

It was only natural, then, that in 1929, when the first commercial coast-to-coast flight was announced by TWA (Trans Western Airways), I was aboard the first plane when it took off from Newark Airport with Colonel Lindbergh at the controls. Even today, as I glance at my souvenir of that pioneering trip, a model of the aircraft with Lindbergh's signature, I recall with something like horror my first contact with making history.

In those early days airplanes flew at fairly low altitudes and were more susceptible to air currents still untamed by aeronautic engineers. Stated briefly, our trip westward was marred by something lightly referred to as turbulence, and

our plane with its occupants was buffeted about like objects in a Disney cartoon. So violent was my reaction to all this that I had to be carried off the plane to a hospital when we touched down at Kansas City, Missouri.

The next day, strengthened by a good night of sedated sleep, and cheered by optimistic weather forecasts, I decided that it would take less courage to go on to California than to face the gibes of my friends in New York. So, let it be recorded that I made the first commercial flight to Kansas City and the second from there to Los Angeles. And I am still an aviation enthusiast with hundreds of thousands of miles as a passenger under my safety belt.

To advertising and promotion people in department stores, the celebration of Christmas is an annual challenge. At Bamberger's, with our built-in desire to compete with Macy's, the giant of New York's big stores, this was an obsession, and it was in the sweat and swelter of midsummer that I was asked to focus my fertile imagination on a way to match or beat Macy's Thanksgiving Day parade.

Santa Claus came to me during the August dog days in the form of a salesman. His wares were a packaged promotion for Christmas—six genuine reindeer to be delivered to the store four weeks before Christmas with an equally genuine Eskimo in attendance. I was assured that this would be exclusive, for a mere $25,000 price tag. I was sure that New Jersey children would flock to Bamberger's to see Santa with *live* reindeer, direct from the snows of the North.

Having thus disposed of Christmas, I put the whole matter aside and went on to other things. But one crisp November day I found myself smack in the middle of *l'affaire* reindeer. A brisk voice at the other end of my phone asked, as if this

sort of thing happened every day, "We've got six crates with reindeer in them marked for delivery to Bamberger's. What do you want us to do with them?"

What indeed to do with them? Somehow I had made no provision for receiving or housing reindeer. Armed by inexperience, surely the greatest teacher, I had them installed in a large cellar. But I hadn't realized how rambunctious the beasts would be after being penned up in narrow crates for several weeks. The sight of them flinging their bodies, especially their valuable antlers, against the brick walls was almost more than I could bear.

Finally a wire corral was erected in a separate building. And here, on fake snow, and in the company of Ikwa the Eskimo who was installed in an ersatz igloo, the reindeer found a measure of peace. Pending our grand parade, we permitted children to view the corral, and they, at least, enjoyed the whole thing immensely.

Meanwhile, I pulled out all the stops to promote the parade. For days we ran ads with banner heads reading, "See Santa and His Live Reindeer" and carrying the route of the parade. Our float, with its magnificent sled brimming over with multicolored gift boxes, was sure to inspire a new high in Yuletide giving—and buying.

But calamity was to put a damper on my euphoria. Three days before the parade, an unseasonable warm spell hit the East. The silly reindeer, confused by this unaccustomed warmth, decided that spring had arrived and right before my eyes began to shed their lovely antlers. To call these appendages their crowning glory would be sheer understatement. Without them they looked like sad skinny cows.

This was no laughing matter, although I confess the hurried conference of my staff was marked by giggles, and

after the ingestion of some of Newark's famous needle beer, guffaws. Reindeer without antlers would be as incomplete a picture as Santa without a beard. But finally we arrived at a solution.

We rounded up every taxidermist on both sides of the Hudson and put them to work on "Operation Antlers." In short, they were offered generous fees to replace the antlers by any method they could devise. This consisted of wiring the horns to the remaining stumps—no mean task on an unbroken animal equipped with casehardened hoofs. Somehow, it was done in time for the parade.

Watching the gyrations of the reindeer and having witnessed the violence of their reaction to the strange doings of civilization, I lived in dread of their leaping off the float into the mass of children we expected along the line of march. At the last minute, I had the whole thing, Santa and all, screened in. This precaution happily added to the camouflage. Nobody even guessed that the noble creatures of the North were wearing falsies.

I can report for the sake of those who might be concerned that a new crop of antlers grew after Christmas when the temporary ones were removed. And the animals were presented, with appropriate ceremony, by Mr. Bamberger to High Point Park, where their progeny still roam.

During the intermission of a Philharmonic Orchestra concert for which I made a pilgrimage to New York every Thursday, I looked down from my perch in the top gallery of Carnegie Hall and recognized Mr. and Mrs. Fuld in one of the choice boxes. When I learned that they were regular subscribers, I was emboldened to propose an idea that had been percolating in my brain for some weeks. I suggested to

Mr. Fuld that we broadcast the Philharmonic concerts over WOR. Instead of the music being limited to the audience of twenty-seven hundred people in the hall, it could reach many thousands.

Mr. Fuld shook his head. "Ridiculous," he snapped. "Who wants to hear symphony music? It's for the educated few."

I maintained my position so obdurately that he decided to teach me a lesson. "Bring in a few girls from the bookkeeping department," he ordered his secretary. "Pick them at random."

In a matter of a very few minutes a dozen or so came in, some of them pale with fear, all of them searching their memories and consciences for possible wrongdoings. Fuld didn't waste any time. "Ladies," he asked, "if you were offered the opportunity to hear symphony concerts on the air, would you listen?"

To his astonishment and my great relief, their answer came in unison, "Yes, sir."

Fuld dismissed the girls and turned to me, saying, "I still think it's a damfool idea."

The next day I was amazed to receive a telephone call from Mrs. Fuld. Her husband had mentioned the incident at home, and she wanted to know how much the symphony broadcasts would cost. I gave her the figure I had received from Arthur Judson, the manager of the Philharmonic. "Fifteen thousand dollars for the season."

"Is that all?" was her comment. "Men have no imagination. Go ahead and arrange for the broadcasts, but never mention my name in connection with them."

These words signaled the first symphony concert broadcast in the United States and probably in the world.

Wasting no time, I made immediate arrangements to get

the concerts on the air the following Thursday night. The intermission break posed a problem. What to broadcast during the fifteen to twenty minutes, which varied with each concert? Suggestions to fill the time varied, from speeches all the way to jazz music. I finally decided to duplicate as nearly as possible what people do in the concert hall—a quiet chat about the music as if the audience at home were relaxing with us in the corridors over a cigarette. Thus the informal intermission chat between the halves in symphony concerts was born.

For the first few broadcasts I wrote the program notes which were read by an announcer. On one such Thursday night while I was smoking a cigarette in the corridor toward the end of the intermission, our engineer rushed to me, grabbed my arm and exclaimed: "Quick—the announcer has run out of material—he's stuttering and stammering, trying to figure out something to say." I plowed through the crowd and landed in the little alcove next to the stage where the announcer, beaded with perspiration, was stumbling over some impromptu remarks. The conductor, Willem Mengelberg, had decided to take a six-minute longer rest than planned, following a fifty-two minute rendition of a Bruckner symphony, and my notes could not be stretched.

I sat down at the microphone and began by saying that I was not very fond of Bruckner music and no wonder Mr. Mengelberg needed a longer rest than we anticipated. I then asked the listeners if they agreed with me about the "longevity and loquacity" of Bruckner symphonies and invited them to write their opinions to the station. The next day we were deluged with mail, mostly in appreciation of the frankness and spontaneity of the "rescue-speech" and asking for more

such informal talks. I carried on with these every Thursday night, and later on Sunday afternoons.

For three years, as I moved up the scale in the advertising department, I continued with this extracurricular activity. I was stationed at a table with my microphone behind a curtain in the wings, and broadcast my comments from notes I had prepared between copywriting assignments in more mundane fields. A novice, I had the naïve notion that to read from a written script would sound stilted. Speaking extemporaneously and trying to fit into the split-second timing of a broadcast was a high-tension assignment, but the opportunity to share my musical ideas with thousands was satisfaction enough.

During one Sunday afternoon broadcast I inadvertently made my stage debut. Making ready for the soloist in the second half of the program, a zealous stagehand who had forgotten my presence behind the curtain pushed a piano on-stage right through my spot in the wings. The nose of the concert grand carried me, my table and microphone air-borne onto the stage just as I was describing the third movement of a symphony being played that day. Lunging at the mike, I managed to catch it as I lay prone on the stage, adding into the microphone, "That, ladies and gentlemen, was the strangest movement of all."

It was a weekly challenge, but the time I spent backstage at Carnegie Hall was a rare experience for a young music lover. To be able to stand in the wings, less than a hundred feet from the podium, and to follow the directions of the world's master conductors with my own score provided a unique musical education. My favorites among the conductors who came to the Philharmonic were Bruno Walter

and Otto Klemperer. But my special hero was the Maestro, Arturo Toscanini.

To see and hear him build the major scores of the symphonic literature, phrase by phrase, was a privilege granted to few. I studied his every move, my eyes shifting from my score to his baton as it whipped through the air in Toscanini's peculiar circular pattern. The infectiousness of Toscanini's rhythm and the incomparable sonority he evoked could not be impaired by his croaking singing voice which I could clearly hear from my vantage point.

In those years, the closest I ever got to the Maestro was when he brushed by me on his way to the Green Room during the intermission. His eyes blazing, his brow dripping with perspiration, he might be muttering imprecations against one or all of the players. After an exceedingly sunny performance, I could hear him say, *"Bène, bène."*

I did not dare approach him. Although near enough to touch him, I could sense his remoteness. He was so withdrawn, so much a part of the music he had conjured up that he might have been on a mountain top. It would be some time before we would meet and became close friends—a distinction I shall always cherish.

During those busy days at Bamberger's I discovered a haven where I could find solace in music. I made frequent visits to the store's piano department. Pianos have always fascinated me. Seeing so many in one room—the many makes, shapes and sizes standing at random angles—was an abundance of riches for me.

Seated at one of the grands one day, I noticed a well-known local music teacher, Mrs. Clara Husserl, helping a pupil select a piano. At that moment it occurred to me that the Bamberger piano department might become the center

of Newark's musical activities. So were born the Bamberger Music Scholarships which annually enabled ten gifted New Jerseyites to study for a year at the Institute of Musical Art, now the Juilliard School in New York.

Winners of the scholarships were picked by a panel of distinguished judges after a series of eliminations. This included such musicians as Frank Damrosch, Dean of the School of Musical Arts, and Martha Baird, the present Mrs. John D. Rockefeller, Jr., as well as other New Yorkers and local musical figures. The chairman of the scholarship board was an unusual man who was to become a strong influence in my developing years in Newark—Spaulding Frazer.

Frazer was one of the state's leading lawyers and a knowledgeable music lover. An individualist with a penchant for public affairs, he was sought after by politicians and elected officials because of his ability to blend practicality and vision.

As counsel for the North Jersey Transit Commission, a body created by Governor A. Harry Moore, he was for some years deeply immersed in plans for solving future transportation problems which were foreseen for New Jersey. Responsive to my avid curiosity about the commission's far-flung schemes, Frazer welcomed me to his office in off hours and made all the maps and engineers' projections available to me.

My imagination fired by the scope of this planning, I conceived an area centered in Newark which would emerge as a new metropolis to vie with New York. I called it "Jerseyopolis." Complete with colored maps and compelling statistics, I presented the plan to Mr. Fuld, who was then suffering frustration at the hands of the slow-paced chamber of commerce in his efforts to promote a "Greater Newark." Fuld's fancy was caught, and I soon found myself spending

less time at my desk and more time learning the rudiments of Jersey politics. This was my first experience with a typical horse-and-buggy paced commission dealing with high velocity problems. It was my primary education in long-range planning and municipal affairs, seeds of interest that were to bear fruit not too many years later in New York.

Today, speeding to and from Newark Airport or looking out of a Washington-bound train as it crosses the Jersey Meadows, I am always entranced by the broad ribbons of highways, parkways, and turnpikes that traverse the state in every direction, and I marvel at how closely so many of these resemble the drawings that Frazer had shown me in those wonderful evenings in his office. Each of us armed with a relaxing scotch and soda, the obstacles to "Jersey-opolis" would melt away as the spires and five-leveled traffic lanes of our dream city would virtually leap off the drawing boards into reality. But our plan was to be stillborn. In quick succession, my chief supporters, Walter Moler and Felix Fuld, died.

The sudden deaths of these two imaginative men was a new and shocking experience for me. These were the first of many of my teachers and sponsors who were to be cut off suddenly and irrevocably from the scenes of my expanding activities. Because I had come up so quickly and so young in the company of men so much older than myself, these separations were inevitable, but I never learned to accept them with equanimity. Each succeeding tragedy burned itself permanently into my consciousness.

When Felix Fuld died in February, 1929, the soul and the direction went out of the store. My personal loss was immeasurable. He was something of a martinet and certainly a taskmaster, but he was my idol and my champion.

As an executive, Fuld was a master. In all my experience and direct contact with some of the world's most able operators, I have never seen a better administrator. Aside from personally directing the day-to-day operation of a forty-million-dollar business, Fuld's active participation in civic and philanthropic work made him the busiest and most powerful executive in the State of New Jersey.

The clarity of his mind, the quick, incisive directions and unrelenting follow-through made an impression on me which has remained with me through my life. It was an entirely new experience for me to see that it was possible by clarity of concept and clear instructions to conduct many diverse activities simultaneously.

After Fuld's death, Louis Bamberger, his partner, a man of seventy-five who had left the store's management to Fuld, was forlorn. One of the few who foresaw the economic depression that would be signaled by the market crash, when the owners of R. H. Macy & Company made him an offer for the Bamberger Store in the summer of 1929, he quickly accepted. When I asked him why he acted with what seemed abruptness, the answer came in his simple and direct fashion. "If you get a good offer, take it. Don't wait and don't bargain."

For Mr. Bamberger and for the Straus family, owners of R. H. Macy & Co., this was simply good business. But to those of us whose careers were tied up with the success of the Bamberger Store, it cried out defeat. For Macy's, more than any of the other New York stores, was the prime target in our running battle to gain pre-eminence in the merchandising field.

As advertising manager I was deeply involved in this economic combat. On our early morning broadcasts on WOR

I used to bait Macy's by undercutting the specials they had advertised in the evening papers of the previous day. This would upset their traditional claim of being 6 per cent lower than their competition.

Our new owners were the three Straus brothers, sons of Isidor Straus, who had gone down on the *Titanic.* Arthur Brisbane called them "The Three Lynxes," but Jesse, Percy and Herbert, Harvard men all and the first to draw new talent from the country's leading universities, did much to raise the level of standards and training in the department store field. Nonetheless, my worst fears were realized when on their first visit, one of the Strauses informed me that they were not interested in radio and would probably rid themselves of WOR, which they considered a doubtful asset. My first assignment under their management was to write an advertisement announcing the store's acquisition by Macy's—a melancholy task, at best. I went to Macy's executive office and submitted the ad to Jesse Straus for approval. After he okayed it, I brought up the subject of WOR and offered a strong defense of its value as a property with a prodigious potential. I concluded by saying that the station might some day be worth as much as the store.

Straus's reaction was to ask me if I knew any French. I nodded affirmatively and he quoted, *"Qui s'excuse, s'accuse."* (He who excuses himself, accuses himself.) He then called his brother Percy in from the next office and asked me to outline my arguments for WOR. Percy heard me through and turning to me asked if I knew any French and repeated, *"Qui s'excuse, s'accuse."* His older brother smiled and said that he had just used the same phrase.

At that moment Herbert, the youngest Straus, walked in and, in turn, was told of my desperate defense of the station.

In a split second he asked if I understood any French and rattled off, "*Qui s'excuse, s'accuse.*" As the burst of laughter from the three of us subsided, I said quietly, "You three fellows ought to get together."

Jesse, somewhat apologetically, said, "We have been working together so long that we talk alike."

The austere atmosphere having been broken down by this incident, their resistance waned and they promised to investigate the value of the radio station. And, pending any decisions, they would continue its operation. True to my wild prediction, the station, when it was sold some years later to the General Tire Company, had a price tag, I was told, that was not much less than the sale price of the Bamberger Store in 1929.

I learned many new merchandising methods from the Macy organization and enjoyed the association with their executives, especially Jack Straus, who is now chairman of the company. But Bamberger's wasn't the same without Felix Fuld. In 1930 when Lord and Taylor offered me the position of advertising and publicity director, I accepted, and my move to New York was complete.

Chapter III

In August of 1932 when I was thirty-one I visited Germany, and a new world of international affairs and human relations opened up for me. One of my purposes in making this trip during my vacation was to attend the master classes of Artur Schnabel, the pianist whose unique musicianship had won him primacy among Europe's concert pianists and whose fame had only recently begun to spread to the United States. The rare privilege of hearing and watching as he worked with such artists as Clifford Curzon, Frank Glazer, Rudolf Firkusny, Betty Humby and Lilli Kraus through their next season's concert programs had been arranged for me by Hortense Monath, a brilliant young American concert artist student of Schnabel's, who was to become my wife five years later.

I had met Hortense at a dinner party in Newark. We had quickly discovered a shared enthusiasm for Artur Schnabel, who had just given brilliant performances of the two Brahms piano concertos with the Boston Symphony under Serge Koussevitsky at Carnegie Hall. Dark eyed, with black hair severely swept back and with striking ivory skin, Hortense

and her intense and absolute devotion to the piano were to me an irresistible attraction. Although born in the United States, her years of study and concertizing abroad had virtually transformed her into a European. In fact, at the time of our meeting she was still the wife of Paul Monath, a Viennese businessman she had married in Europe. Music was her life and a compelling basis of our coming marriage.

Schnabel was a man of marked originality and many interests. Short and stocky with severely brushed back white hair and piercing steel-gray eyes, his brilliantly articulate discourses on world politics were no less commanding than his release of phrases from a Mozart Sonata at the piano.

A *Wunderkind,* Artur Schnabel had been sent to Vienna from his native Bohemia at the age of twelve to study with the illustrious Theodor Leschetizky. It was at the turn of the century and Brahms was the new hero of the European musical world. But young Schnabel, with the perverse independence that was to become one of his chief characteristics, had no affinity for the work of the heavily bearded German master. Finally Leschetizky handed Schnabel some newly discovered sonatas of Franz Schubert to study. In Schnabel's own words to me, "Here I found a full supply of happiness."

His introduction of these little-known pieces to concert audiences and his incomparable performances of them are hallmarks of Schnabel's immortality. His first public acceptance grew slowly as a chamber music artist in a trio that included Pablo Casals and Carl Flesch. Suddenly, however, his fame flared across Europe following his masterful performance of the thirty-two Beethoven sonatas in a cycle of five successive concerts in Berlin, which were repeated in Vienna, London and finally in New York in 1934.

The Schnabel master classes were unique and the most

exciting musical experience of my life. In effect, the great pedagogue and his wife, Therese, one of Germany's most celebrated lieder singers, held musical court in their home at Wielandstrasse 14, Kurfürstendamm, Berlin.

Two pianos stood in the center of the long, rectangular studio. They were ringed by a dozen or more students in chairs and on the floor. At a signal from Schnabel, one of the students, always an accomplished musician and perhaps already launched on a concert career, would play through the four movements of a major work, such as a Beethoven Sonata, without interruption.

Schnabel would sit at the other piano or walk quietly around the room during this performance, puffing away on a heavy black cigar. At the end of the piece, he would begin a broad discussion of the philosophy and background underlying the structure of the music. He would often illustrate some passage by singing it in his heavy bass voice and would employ innumerable devices, even impromptu poetry, to communicate his ideas of the rhythm and meaning of the piece.

It must be underscored that each of his students was a recognized artist in his own right and was invited to sit in on the two- to three-hour lessons of the others. As a result each pupil had the benefit of learning the scores of all the music in the lessons. It was a grueling test for the performer to be surrounded on all sides by colleagues—in effect, a jury of his peers, but they would grudgingly admit that it was an invaluable experience. Technique and the mechanics of playing were taken for granted. The concern was only with music ideas and the original intention of the composer. The totality of this, the music, the enthusiasm, and often the performance of Schnabel himself along with the pupil was

so electrifying an experience that I would leave each lesson spent and ecstatic.

When I learned of Schnabel's intense interest in politics, I took occasion to initiate discussions on the subject with him. Schnabel reinforced my contention that tragic days lay ahead for Germany. The world was in the grip of the great depression that had been triggered by the 1929 Wall Street debacle. Germany, still suffering the aftereffects of defeat in World War I, was struggling with runaway inflation and drastic shortages in all the goods needed for a minimal standard of living.

The morale of the nation was low. A sick fatalism, a kind of hysteria had taken over. The remaining pleasure spots in Berlin bore evidence of this. I remember vividly how, in this period of decadence, homosexuality throve in the cafés and coffee houses of Kurfürstendamm.

It was common knowledge that the Weimar Republic, saddled with the excesses of the Versailles Treaty and economic conditions that admitted no solution, was doomed. Even their revered national leader, the aged Von Hindenburg, could do no more than stave off for a few troubled months the Republic's inevitable collapse. Authorities I met, journalists, businessmen and even politicians, all confirmed my impression that the nation's leadership was bankrupt. Germany was ripe for a man on horseback.

After attending a number of sessions at Schnabel's, I canceled my other travel arrangements to use the rest of my time for a tour of Germany. I resolved to get a cross section of political thinking from people in various areas. Walking through the streets of Weimar, the city of Franz Liszt and Goethe, I saw a crowd outside a meeting hall. I learned that a political meeting was getting under way inside. As I pushed

my way through the crowd to the rear of the hall and even as I sought a seat, my attention was immediately riveted to the speaker on the platform, a wild-eyed mustached man with an inappropriate resemblance to Charlie Chaplin.

My knowledge of German enabled me to follow with strange fascination the hysterical tirade that spilled out of Hitler in an obscene cascade. His appeal was magnetic and his maniacal eyes, fixed on each individual in the audience, gripped and held them.

The little man who was to become the most violent figure in modern history was belaboring the audience with a harangue on the injustices of the Versailles Treaty. He vowed to tear it to shreds. Suddenly, he shifted his vituperation to focus on the Jews, whom he held to be largely responsible for Germany's plight. After a violent denunciation, he declared that one of the first orders of business when he became the Füehrer of all Germany would be the liquidation of the Jews, adding with a sweeping gesture "... not only here in Germany and in Europe—but all the world."

Hitler's anti-Semitism was no secret. His threats against the Jews were a well-advertised part of his political program. But to see him and to hear him as he spewed forth his hatred hit me hard. He was talking about *me.*

A storm of excitement had erupted all around me. This was a Germany I did not know about. These Germans were far removed from those I had met earlier in my trip. The others were docile, straining to please almost to the point of obsequiousness. But here, in gentle Bavaria, the same type of men and women, but organized and aroused, were on their feet, some of them standing on their chairs, their eyes fired with hate, their throats echoing Hitler's bloodcurdling impre-

cations, their fists clenched in preparation for victims still out of their reach.

It was my first frightening experience with men regressing to primitive passion. First I stared at Hitler and the people in the hall as if I were living the unreality of a bad dream. Then my astonishment gave way to biting anger which alternated with fear for my safety. I even moved to a position that would give me quick and easy access to the exit if necessary, and I remained standing through the nightmare of that meeting.

Wandering through the winding streets of Weimar toward my hotel, and through all that sleepless night, my mind churned with new thoughts that Adolf Hitler had aroused in me. Hitler didn't invent anti-Semitism. It was an evil scourge that had flourished in Germany and in many other lands long before he was born. I now knew that Hitler had the power to fan this flame which had been smoldering for more than a century into a consuming fire that would resist the most heroic attempts to quench it. The *Sieg Heils* would forever echo in my ears and the frenzy of these Bavarian burghers, awakened by the rasping oratory of this Austrian madman, would never quit my consciousness.

But Hitler had forced another realization upon me, an awareness of myself as a Jew. Until this day in Weimar, I had had confused, certainly unresolved, feelings about my Jewish heritage. Having come from a home where the traditional holiday rituals were the total of our observance, only the ceremonials, the songs and the tragic history of Jews held any appeal for me. Although Zionism had a bedrock base in Baltimore under the leadership of Dr. Harry Friedenwald, president of my family's congregation, and Henrietta Szold,

the founder of Hadassah, the dream of a Jewish State was not in me.

I had no desire to escape my background: I merely sat on the sidelines—a spectator. The error of this passivism now confronted me with swift and compelling clarity. I kept repeating to myself the revelation of the Weimar meeting hall—"He's talking about me. He means *me.*"

The remainder of my tour of Germany reinforced the conclusions I had reached in Weimar. The Germans, never convinced that they had actually been defeated, were ready to follow like sheep behind Hitler. He was to herd them to ultimate ignominy and death.

Aboard the S.S. *Europa,* en route to the States, I prepared a statement of protest and warning against the impending danger of a Germany under Adolf Hitler. As advertising and publicity director at Lord and Taylor, my views on merchandising and advertising subjects had been receiving considerable press coverage. It was something of a surprise, therefore, to the reporters who invaded the ship on our return to New York, when I gave them my views on German politics rather than a report on European retailing. But my statement was hot and they gobbled it up. I remember, specifically, *The New York Times* carrying my warning that "the little man with the mustache must be stopped or he will take over Germany and blow up the world."

These were strong words. Hitler had not yet been taken that seriously. Nor was I, in fact. The next day I received a phone call from Adolf Ochs, the publisher of *The Times.* They had run my story, but he felt that he should warn me against my "intemperate and extreme views." Ochs patronizingly ascribed my vehemence to my youth and lack of moderation.

I have no intention of singling out Mr. Ochs for not having a better appreciation of what was in store for us. His attitude was typical of the feeling prevalent among too many Americans. Unfortunately, it was shared by some of the Jewish businessmen I had met in Berlin. They, too, underestimated Hitler's messianic hold on the German people and overestimated their own security.

In fairness to them and to many more of us, it must be said that the prospect of a German resurgence so soon after their defeat seemed unreal at the time. Even the ogre, Hitler, with his relentless drive had not shaken enough of us into a realization of the possibility of a restored and dangerous Germany. It just couldn't happen.

Less than a year after my return, I was unfortunately proved right. Hitler became Reichschancellor of Germany and the world was headed toward an unparalleled period of violence and death. My worst forebodings were surpassed by the events that crowded into the remaining years of the thirties. Historians have told and retold the stories of the Rhineland, Austria, Czechoslovakia, Poland and the rest. We came to know new words: *blitzkrieg, panzer, quisling.*

Hitler's rise to power was marked by a succession of broken promises which had been accepted by hopeful men who were desperately praying and paying for time. But one promise Hitler kept—his vow to rid Germany and each of his conquered satellites of the Jews. Methods for attaining a *judenrein* Europe changed as the years of Hitlerism advanced, but the attempt at extermination—the final solution—was inevitable.

While they could, the first Jews to read the handwriting on the wall began to leave in small scattered groups, then in

a steady flow. These refugees told tales of incredible cruelty and sadism. Americans began to believe the reports they had scorned a few months earlier. Leaders of the Jewish community, especially in New York and on the East Coast began to stir.

But how to strike back at the Nazis? To let the shrill cry of anti-Semitism go unanswered would be tantamount to accepting it. To look the other way and ignore the ugly facts was what Hitler counted on in his untrammeled campaign of spoliation and death.

A committee of some of New York's most illustrious citizens was formed to organize a boycott of German goods. Headed by Samuel Untermeyer, the distinguished lawyer and powerful politician, they called on the big retail stores to join in the boycott but they were rebuffed. The store officials refused to co-operate on the grounds of their traditional avoidance of involvement in a political issue.

Ironically, Lord and Taylor, one of the big New York stores, non-Jewish in ownership, saved the day. Joseph E. Pridday, president of the company, having agreed to my suggestion that we join the boycott, withstood many pressures against his courageous action and with the wholehearted support of his other officials, Van Buren Sims and Dorothy Shaver, maintained this anti-Nazi policy and permitted me to publicize it.

The New York newspapers, with their thousands of inches of department store advertising, shied clear of the story, but they couldn't smother it. Ernest Gruening, then the editor of *The Nation* and now the distinguished Senator from Alaska, ran the story complete. Other news magazines as well as the broadcasters picked it up, and before long Lord

and Taylor, in spite of the New York papers, was known across the country as the store that led the boycott.

Frankly, my ability to persuade the store's hierarchy to adopt this adventuresome attitude was largely based on the success of the new image of Lord and Taylor I had helped to create. Surrounded by a staff of young, creative artists and copywriters of my own choosing, I had revolutionized Lord and Taylor advertising. In fact, the breezy fashion figures and freewheeling signature that identified our ads are still, three decades later, the store's hallmark.

The new style of Lord and Taylor advertising attracted wide attention in advertising and merchandising circles. I was invited to speak at meetings all over the country to explain the theories behind this new technique.

I was particularly pleased by an invitation from New York University to teach a course in advertising in their evening school. For years this large university had had a magnetic effect on me from my apartment on the other side of Washington Square.

The rewards of my three years on the NYU faculty are best measured by the success of my many former students whom I meet to this day in the strangest places. Entrepreneurs, advertising managers, the head of a YMHA in Pittsburgh, a president of a chain of fifty stores, a Pan-American Airways executive, a publisher—they turn up like squirrels from trees wherever I go.

Even in the quiet of the campus, however, I wasn't able to fit comfortably into the accepted routine. It seemed typical that on my first night I should have to go to extreme measures to convince the university's guards that despite the youthfulness of my appearance I was entitled to the dubious privilege of using the faculty elevator. During my time at NYU I

eschewed written examinations, predigested curricula, and often when moved by the clemency of the weather would adjourn my class to the park outside to hold forth under the stars. I imagine that I must have been a bit difficult for the Dean to take, but my students enjoyed my classes and I had an invaluable experience inside the world of education from the laboratory of the classroom.

But my advertising methods had accomplished more than setting new standards for Fifth Avenue. Coupled with an aggressive public relations campaign and daring innovations, the ads created a new image for Lord and Taylor. All this helped us survive the depression in better health than most of the city's big stores. We bubbled with youthful exuberance and it was our effervescence which attracted new, young and loyal customers. In the light of a survey made just prior to my joining the store which revealed that its average customer was over fifty years of age, this change was even more significant.

One of the major events in the industry was the Annual Conference on Retail Distribution. I was scheduled far in advance to speak at the Boston meeting in September of 1933, and to share the rostrum with many leaders in the field. H. Gordon Selfridge, head of the famous London store that bears his name, was to speak by radio from London.

I was prepared to discuss the problems faced by the industry in the depression, the principal topic of the conference, but the meeting took place immediately after my return from another trip to Europe. I just couldn't restrain my desire to pass along my violent and still so fresh reactions. On the train to Boston I prepared a new speech which I delivered in my most passionate style. It called for a boycott of Ger-

man goods. The audience seemed stunned, but I didn't even stay to hear the reaction to my words. I rushed to my hotel to wait for my train back to New York.

I sat in my hotel room for an hour, stewing over the conservatism of my colleagues and wondering what effect this was going to have back at Lord and Taylor. Then, unexpectedly, my phone rang, and when I answered a high-pitched, precise voice announced, "This is Professor Frankfurter. Your speech is reported on the front page of the *Boston Transcript*. It's great. Could you possibly join me for tea this afternoon?"

I rushed to the Cambridge side of the Charles River to Felix Frankfurter's charming little house at 192 Brattle Street. Then a professor at Harvard Law School and the mentor of many future judges and government leaders, Frankfurter and his bounding vitality, impeccable dress and facile use of the English language fascinated me. Most of all, I was heartened by his warm approval of my speech.

On my return from Boston a storm awaited me at Lord and Taylor. Pressures from other merchants, who felt that the store had opened a floodgate when we banished German goods and took sides in a political issue, finally had some effect on the Lord and Taylor management. Although Mr. Pridday had not changed the policy of the store against German goods, even before my trip to Boston he asked me to soft-pedal any publicity.

The Boston speech, however, was reprinted throughout the country and abroad. Instead of a soft pedal I had sounded a horn as clear as Gabriel's.

The local merchants, already envious of Lord and Taylor's leadership and publicity, accused Pridday of perfidy. He had no alternative but to turn the eye of the storm on me, as I

was the culprit who had violated his instructions. So strong was the opposition, in fact, that for a few days I felt that my position was threatened. But the storm passed over, and the store did not abandon its policy against German goods.

I can't honestly report that the boycott had any profound effect on the advent of Hitlerism, but it was a beginning, an awakening, and an expression of growing indignation that would culminate in our eventual triumph over fascism. As for me, I had learned something that would be of use to me in the years to come: not to fear to use platforms to voice my pent-up feelings concerning major causes.

I had staked my job against the leverage I enjoyed to plunge a company which I served as a top executive, into the cauldron of a heated public issue. The strange thing about this, in retrospect, is that I did not even consider the possible loss of my job at the time I made the speech. It seemed the right thing to do. The issue seemed more important than the subject matter of the conference and the consequences that might befall me. The only thing that I could see with a blind passion was the chance to bring out into the open before leading American merchants a subject which up to then had been approached on tiptoe.

Frankfurter pursued his interest in me. On one of his trips to New York he urged me to become active in Jewish affairs. "Storm clouds are gathering for the Jewish people," he predicted. "We will need all the young, active adherents we can mobilize to forestall a world tragedy."

But, while I was intent on bending my energies toward all means of awakening Americans to the realities of Hitler's evil aims and to combat them wherever possible, I was not convinced that membership in Jewish organizations constituted the best way for me. I feared the dissipation of energies

in working through traditional organizations designed for other than emergency activities. A crisis was impending. A frontal attack with a new set of rules, or possibly no rules, was called for.

Frankfurter politely persisted and one day wrote from Boston to advise me that I would receive a letter from Justice Brandeis of the Supreme Court inviting me to visit him in Washington. "He is a great man," Frankfurter wrote. "He will talk to you. Perhaps he can convince you where I apparently cannot."

The invitation came in Brandeis' own hand to visit him in his Washington apartment on the following Saturday afternoon. On arriving I was immediately struck by the unadorned, almost ascetic atmosphere in Brandeis' home. Books lined the walls from floor to ceiling in several of the rooms. The Justice's study, where he received me, was typically modest and spare. An easy chair, a couch and a table which was covered with papers, indicating I had interrupted work, almost filled the room.

As Brandeis sat back in his chair and talked with me, I studied his face. He bore a strong resemblance to Abraham Lincoln with his protruding lower lip and aristocratic aquiline nose which arched into his soft brooding eyes beneath a massive forehead. Impassive, almost masklike, his face would come alive and his thoughtful eyes would light up when he was making a point.

Brandeis told me how he, the product of a department store family in Louisville, Kentucky, like Theodor Herzl had become a Zionist rather late in life, but that he found the movement a growing historical necessity. "Until the Jews have a piece of land which we can call our own, we will be the first victims of any major economic upheaval or political

tyrant," he emphasized. "We must have roots, a foothold, to gain the respect of others and to keep it."

I asked the Justice why, in the light of the inevitable and transparent threat from Hitler, so many people, even some Jews, were still blind and complacent.

"They can't help it," he replied. "My experience of almost eighty years has taught me that human judgment, at best, is bad."

He took me into the next room, which was lined on all sides with books. "These books," he pointed out, "all deal with one or another phase of insurance. Yet, I would say that I know very little about the subject."

It was an unstaged demonstration of the modesty of the man who was the father of the low-cost insurance laws of the State of Massachusetts. It was also his way of emphasizing how little we are capable of learning in our lifetime.

Brandeis told me that Hadassah, the women's Zionist movement which supported a hospital and child welfare work in Palestine, was one of the best organized and most effective groups in the country. He gave me my first appreciation of the almost fanatical zeal of my own four sisters, who were all Hadassah members.

My face-to-face talk with this wonderfully sage man left an impression on me that has not been lost to this day, for he taught me that wisdom is the capacity to confront intolerable ideas with equanimity. But it took me many years to appreciate the advice he gave me as he walked me to the door—a formula for a happy, nonpressured life.

"You young people with talent are not constructing your lives to derive the most usefulness from them," he admonished. "You, personally, could organize your life so as to live with simple comforts on five thousand a year. And you

could earn that easily in a part-time effort. Then you could have the rest of your time to do the things you really want to do."

Like most advice given me when I was young, it was nearly forgotten until experience taught me the same lesson, painfully and after great wasted effort. Some years later when doing the work I considered important in behalf of the same cause Brandeis had been urging on me—Palestine—his wise words strengthened my resolve to forego an income many times greater than $5,000 to buy freedom of action.

Even today, as I get further and further from the world of big business to involve myself in more creative work, in diplomacy and national affairs, Brandeis' advice is ever in my mind. Somewhat mellowed and with heightened perception, I see around me unhappy proof of his prediction, spoken to me many years ago in his Washington apartment, that as we Americans became richer and bigger we would grow less and less secure.

While Justice Brandeis did not succeed in convincing me that I should join any Zionist organizational work, he did inspire me to an intensification of my efforts against Hitler and Nazism with all means at my disposal.

There was a growing militancy in this anti-Fascist fight. In print and on many platforms, there was a cadre of opposition to Hitler's evil. We were not an organized group, but James Waterman Wise, son of the famous Rabbi Stephen Wise, collected our thoughts in a book, *Nazism: An Assault on Civilization.* Among those who contributed to the book were Alfred E. Smith, Dr. John Haynes Holmes, Ludwig Lewisohn, Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, Dorothy Thompson, Stanley High, and many of the nation's most prominent journalists and writers.

My interest in German culture, particularly its music, was known, so I was asked to contribute a chapter on *Gleichschaltung,* the standardization or "bringing into line" of intellectual activity common to all authoritarian societies but especially virulent in Germany under Hitler. I tried to emphasize the tragedy of Germany on the level of thought and artistic expression which were focused on extolling the greater glory of the Third Reich while silencing the uncoordinated voices of the opposition.

I felt that it was important to underscore the lasting effect Hitlerism would have on civilization if this prostitution of talent and creativity were to go unchallenged. The spirit of my essay, "The Degradation of Culture," is epitomized in one paragraph:

> Everyone is quick to protest the hounding of men, but hounding the spirit is even more inhuman. In the assault on the hearts of living men, the animal essence of the Nazi spirit is revealed. Of what will the poet sing when he dare not reveal his soul? Who can discover new beauties when state-glorification and war-worship are the sole objectives? To the civilized mind there can be no art in Germany as long as the spirit of man is in torture.

Chapter IV

In the summer of 1933 I attended the London Economic Conference and learned at first hand the futility of such full-dress meetings among nations, especially in the glaring light of publicity. Conversely, I began to lean toward "quiet diplomacy."

The Conference was a holdover piece of business inherited by Franklin Delano Roosevelt when he took office that year. Acting under the initiative of the British, the assembled delegations were to draft new ground rules for coping with economic depression which held the United States and Europe in its grip.

Friends among Roosevelt's Brain Trust had discussed my going as a member of the U.S. delegation, but it was finally decided that I would be more useful as an unofficial observer who could report back outside of normal channels. I did make the crossing with some of the delegation, however, and the trip was a political education for me. Raymond Moley, Assistant Secretary of State and a charter member of the Brain Trust, headed the group, which included members of both Houses of the Congress and Herbert Bayard

Swope, former editor and publisher of the old *New York World.* There were other newspapermen aboard including George Sokolsky, who, it seemed to me, was present as more than a journalist: he kept busy sending cables from the ship dealing with matters which were never published to my knowledge and which I suspect were not germane to the Conference.

Still quite young and unquestionably a tyro in these matters, I joined them in their regular visits to the ship's lounge and shared many a bottle of champagne at the government's expense. Listen attentively I did, however, and quickly drew my own conclusions. An entry in my diary dated June 22 when we were still aboard the S.S. *Manhattan* read, "The Conference should never have been called. It was Hoover's teamwork with England. We will do well to come out of it even."

As time proved, Roosevelt had already arrived at this evaluation and saw to it that the Conference died aborning. An interesting sidelight was the beginning of the end of the political career of Raymond Moley. An ambitious man, eager to try out the theories he had taught for so many years at Columbia University, he pitted himself against Cordell Hull, the former Tennessee mountaineer whose backwoods shrewdness had developed apace in the Washington jungle, making him one of the ablest and most feared politicians in the capital. The professor was simply no match for the frontiersman.

Other personalities were on the griddle in London. Ramsay MacDonald, whose health was obviously failing, also fought a losing battle for his political life. The handsome old leader of the British Labor Party was on his last legs as Prime Minister. The failure of the Conference, added to other

defeats, ended not only his career but signaled the return to power of the Conservative Party which paradoxically paralleled the emergence of the New Deal in this country.

It wasn't long before I knew there was nothing for me to do in London, and its weather having contributed to a nasty virus attack, I headed for the sunnier shores of Lake Como, where my friends the Schnabels had settled and were now holding their master classes. Looking back, it seems odd that at this time, Italy, a fascist nation, was regarded as a haven, albeit temporary, for many of the German and Austrian artists fleeing Hitlerism. This, despite the fact that a man with the stature of Toscanini, a national hero, could be attacked by street gangs in Bologna for refusing to play "The Giovinezza," the fascist hymn. But the artists did come to Italy, and that summer at the Schnabel villa overlooking the incomparable blue water of Lake Como, I met such personalities as Otto Klemperer, Paul Hindemith, George Szell and Fritz Stiedry, who was later to become the conductor of the New Friends of Music Orchestra.

The experiences related by these men and others from Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Hungary all painted a grim picture of the rising tide of fascism in Europe. They all had one aim now—to come to the United States. Even as I began to realize that we would soon be called on to provide a haven for the great artists and scholars who could not live under the yoke of dictatorship, it also occurred to me that it would not be long before the United States could become the artistic and cultural center of the world.

If two pianos had taken wings from the diseased atmosphere of the apartment on Wielandstrasse in Berlin, they could not have landed in a more idyllic spot. High on the

circling hills of Tremezzo, about midway down the winding Lake Como, the Schnabel villa sat like a jewel. I had been previously invited to attend Schnabel's lessons which began at 7 A.M. and ended at 2 P.M. without interruption. Promptly at 7 A.M. the first pupil began. He was Rudolf Firkusny, a young product of Czechoslovakia, who was being sponsored by Thomas Masaryk, then President of the country. The piece was the Schumann *C Major Fantasie,* and as I write at this moment I can still hear the stirring opening chords with the rhythmic undercurrent played with the left hand as, following Firkusny, Schnabel sang and demonstrated it at his second piano. Firkusny is now one of our major pianists and his performance of the Schumann *Fantasie* is one of his star pieces.

A telegram from Toscanini summoned me to visit him in his island retreat, Isola Bella, in Lago Maggiore. Arriving at Pallanza, I was met by a small motorboat and whisked to this magical island. The Maestro was at the pier to meet me, beret at a perky angle on his head, but otherwise dressed in his morning costume—striped gray trousers, black alpaca coat, bow tie and soft slippers. His ingratiating smile as he greeted me was warm enough to eclipse the sun shining over our heads. We walked up the flower-lined path to the gracious villa centered in the azure sea.

After what seemed to me to be a gargantuan midday meal with his wife, Carla, and a few of her elderly friends, at which the Maestro ate sparingly as always, he and I sauntered from the table to the piazza. He was over seventy at the time and loved to boast of his physical powers. Sleep, he used to say, was a waste of time. "Only women need to sleep," he once boasted.

"Are you accustomed to taking a nap after lunch?" the

Maestro inquired, peering closely at me through his thick glasses.

I hesitated a moment before answering. This was probably the Maestro's polite way of excusing himself before going off for his own siesta.

"Yes," I finally sputtered, although in all my memory I had never taken a nap in the afternoon.

"*Bène* (fine)," snapped back the Maestro. "I never do. I do not need sleep. I will show you to your room."

Caught flat-footed, I felt like a child being sent to bed as I followed sadly up the winding stairs, the Maestro racing ahead of me, taking the steps in twos. He opened the door carefully on a room that looked out on the lake. It was a dream view. He then went to the window, pulled the old-fashioned shutters together and closed them carefully to keep out the afternoon sun. Then, going over to the bed, he pressed his fingers down into the mattress, testing its softness. Satisfied, he looked at me, smiled his benign smile, tiptoed to the door and opened it gently, then turned around to me and said, "*Dorme bène, caro* (sleep well, my dear)." I could hear his soft, measured tread descending the staircase.

There was nothing left for me to do but to lie down. So I took off my shoes, stretched out on the bed, folded my hands behind the back of my head, and stared at the ceiling. Never had I felt more awake!

After about ten minutes of this immobility, reflecting on my host's gentleness and infinite consideration, I noticed that the house had become suddenly still. The sounds of conversation from the ladies on the piazza below, which had drifted upwards, had stopped. The strains of a few chords from the piano in the Maestro's study below, where he was preparing

for a Brahms cycle with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, also had ceased.

Restless, impatient, I walked to the bedroom door and peered down the hall. All was serene. Almost without realizing it, an impulse sent me tiptoeing down the broad encircling stairs in my stocking feet. Curiosity got the best of me. The utter quiet, the absence of any sign of life or sound, gave me courage to descend all the way.

At the bottom of the stairs my heart began to beat faster. Supposing I should be caught—how could I explain? Still hesitant, I ventured a few steps into the great hall toward the Maestro's studio. Seeing the door open and hearing no sound, I tiptoed nearer until I reached the door. By this time I felt like a truant child. My feelings of guilt, however, were not strong enough to overcome my mounting curiosity: I peered into the room.

There sat the Maestro with the piano score in front of him, head down on the keys. He was asleep.

Chapter V

Now that Hitler was firmly entrenched in Germany, I had not planned another visit there. Aside from other considerations, I had reason to believe that in the light of my well-publicized activities in the German boycott, I might not be welcome. But when Frederick T. Birchall, the chief *New York Times* correspondent in Europe, whom I met on my return to London from Italy, suggested that I go to Berlin with him for a few days, I couldn't resist.

What I saw in Germany exceeded my dire predictions of the previous year. My fears had been conservative compared to the reign of terror and government-authorized gangsterism that had been set in motion immediately after Hitler's ascension to power. The political storm I had seen brewing was now a hurricane laying waste to the meager achievements of the previous democratic government and promising disaster to all who stood in its path.

Adolf Hitler was a far cry from the man who was still being described in many American newspapers as "a political adventurer who would soon fall before the traditional influences of the stable, conservative Germans." I still don't

know if this was a form of political myopia or some sort of whistling-in-the-dark optimism.

It was obvious that to too many Germans who had never fully accepted defeat in 1918, this was merely a continuation of World War I. New borders, new states and new ententes that had been set up as prophylaxis against just this sort of outbreak were of no avail and would soon disappear. In the shrinking world, the Atlantic Ocean would soon be no more than a bomb run, no more formidable than a channel crossing.

These things had to be said in America, where active opposition to Hitlerism was only of token force. Filled with apprehension, I spent most of the return trip marshaling my impressions and conclusions. Almost immediately on debarking, I voiced my conclusions in a broadcast. I had barely finished what I hoped was an impassioned but reasonable assessment of the German picture when I received a telephone call at the radio station from my friend and attorney, Morris Ernst. He had listened.

Ernst asked me to join him for lunch at 21 to meet a friend who had been listening with him. The friend turned out to be Ernest Gruening, editor of *The Nation.*

Gruening plied me with questions about what I had seen in Germany, as well as what I had heard from friends among the artists and musicians who had escaped. Finally he asked if he could publish the text of my broadcast. I assented, of course.

My meeting with Gruening grew into a deep and lasting friendship which has endured to this day. Aside from our mutual concern with political and public affairs, we soon learned that we shared a passion for tennis. Following a match the day after our first meeting, Gruening invited me to join him for dinner at a friend's house. I agreed, and so

had my first meeting with a man who was to be another major influence in my life. Our host was Fiorello La Guardia.

The informal dinner at the Mayor's modest apartment on Fifth Avenue and 109th Street was for a group of men who had gathered to map the strategy of La Guardia's forthcoming campaign for the mayoralty of New York. He was to be the reform candidate against Tammany's interim mayor, William J. O'Brien, who was sitting in for the deposed Jimmy Walker. The first of many meals with Fiorello, the main course of that particular one I remember well—*pasta fagiole,* an Italian dish. Not too keen on *pasta,* I nevertheless tried to keep up with my illustrious dinner partners. Finally I just had to give up despite La Guardia's gibes. He called me a sissy and in the years to follow never failed to recall the story of how I had chickened on the *pasta.* Among others at this first meeting were Adolph Berle, Newbold Morris, and Sidney Hillman. These were important men, but rather than being awed by them, I found them stimulating.

After dinner, we sat around in our shirt sleeves and exchanged ideas on La Guardia's campaign. I had every intention of remaining a listener only. But finally my patience, not a well-developed characteristic at any time, wore out.

"You're going to lose the election," I commented wryly. Taken aback, they turned to me and listened as I told them they were wasting their time with their tirades against Tammany blunderers and thieves. I was sure that the voters in New York knew about these transgressors, and insisted that they wanted to know what the new Fusion Party was going to do about schools, parks, welfare, traffic, police protection and all the rest.

Gathering courage from their silence, which might have been simple courtesy, I went on, "I would dispose of Tam-

many Hall with one blunt sentence in every campaign speech, such as 'Tammany being thieves and brigands, with the city at the brink of bankruptcy, I propose to do the following . . .' and then go on with your positive program."

As I spoke, I could see out of the corner of my eye that La Guardia was staring at me as if I were some sort of oddity. Finally he turned to Gruening and demanded, "Ernest, where did you get this kid?"

"I only met him yesterday," Gruening confessed.

"Well," chirped the Little Flower, "he's either a damn fool or a genius."

Even in my own generous assessment of my talents at that time, I could not lean toward the latter description. Declining either designation, I accepted La Guardia's invitation to visit him at his headquarters the next day. Before long I was deeply involved in his historic campaign, accompanying the dynamic little Italian-American on his whirlwind speaking tours of Harlem, the Bronx and Brooklyn. I pressed him to give more and more talks on welfare and education, then tragically neglected areas in municipal management. We would end an evening's campaigning, sometimes after six or seven speeches, at one in the morning, in La Guardia's apartment, where he would cook hamburgers, which he, his wife, Marie, and I ate ravenously.

After his election Fiorello sent for me and offered me my choice of commissionerships in either the Welfare or Markets Departments. It was a great temptation, but after much soul-searching I decided that the warm friendship which had sprung up between us might not endure this relationship. After working so closely with the man through the campaign, I had come to worship him for his courage, vigor and imagination, but I also respected his hot temper and I knew my

own independent nature. For the time being, I stayed with Lord and Taylor.

Less than a year later, however, I did take on a political assignment from La Guardia which was to provide an education of another sort for me. He asked me to manage the campaign of Joseph D. McGoldrick for the job of City Comptroller.

Just two weeks after La Guardia's election, W. Arthur Cunningham, the man elected to serve with him in the number two spot in the city government, had died as a result of a riding accident. Pending the next election in November, McGoldrick, a Columbia University economics professor and Deputy Comptroller, filled the vacancy. Joe, a bachelor of thirty-six, was a mild man of good intelligence and learning. Although politically shrewd, he was not a particularly forceful personality, and the campaign was to be a severe test for both of us.

When Fiorello asked me to take the job during a quiet dinner at Luchow's with his wife, Marie, I expressed certain doubts. There was the question, for instance, about how my superiors at Lord and Taylor were going to react to my open involvement in municipal politics as well as my ability to hold down two tough jobs simultaneously. I would have to discuss it with them, I told him. But the next morning's newspapers carried the announcement of my appointment and it was too late to back out. It was the first and only time I permitted myself to be manipulated by one of Fiorello's *faits accomplis.*

It was a disaster. Lazarus Joseph, McGoldrick's opponent, was swept in with all the other Democratic candidates in the wake of Herbert Lehman's overwhelming election to the governorship of New York over his Republican rival, Robert

Moses. In the next regular city election when La Guardia was returned to office with a tremendous plurality he, in turn, carried McGoldrick as Comptroller. But I must admit this did not provide any salve for my bruised ego.

Actually, it was a blessing for me. It was the first time in my thirty-three years that I had tasted defeat in a major enterprise—an experience I needed. And, probably of greater importance, I learned something about my limitations. I found out, for instance, that I was not cut out for the unavoidably dirty and tough game of politics. I simply lacked the intestinal fortitude inherent in the tough-skinned, cold-blooded drive to win at all costs. My temperament would not allow for the facile making and forgiving of enemies, the ability to treat personal disillusionment as part of the game and to come bouncing back for more.

One night while I was still smarting from McGoldrick's defeat, I discussed this with the Mayor. We were on the porch at Gracie Mansion watching with hypnotic fascination the constant but frictionless traffic on the East River as it flowed past us. "Ira, politics is a dirty game, a jungle," he said, adding, "Unless you can't control the itch to run, stay out of it."

He was never critical about the loss of the McGoldrick campaign. Years later I found out why. He had fully expected Lehman's popularity to swing the Democratic vote.

Millions of words have been written about the Little Flower. His diminutive, rotund body topped off by a huge head inevitably crowned with his wide-brimmed, sombrero-type felt hat, was a picture which will never be forgotten by anyone, particularly New Yorkers who lived in his time. His never quiet facial features, which always gave the impression that he was about to burst into laughter or tears, were indica-

tive of the zest for life that constantly bubbled furiously in the vitals and spirit of this indomitable man. Everything he did, everything he said, had verve.

La Guardia's appetites were enormous. Not a serious drinker, he nevertheless put away quite a bit of the stuff. In the many evenings I spent with him, especially in the summer when Marie would take their adopted children, Jeanne and Erich, to the country, I was often hard put to keep up with him.

Fiorello never violated his self-imposed rule against drinking alone to the extent that he sometimes would share a drink with a waiter while waiting for a tardy dinner companion. He would knock it down, neat, in one huge gulp, shudder and say without variation, "Hate the taste of the goddam stuff, but it certainly makes me feel good." The scotches that followed would be diluted with soda and would be drunk slowly and with respect for their potential.

Drinking was never a problem, but it did create some untoward incidents. One summer evening Fiorello was scheduled to address the executive committee of the group which had organized the World's Fair. They were to meet at a building overlooking the lagoon. The Mayor and I had stopped for dinner at the city-owned Claremont Inn on Riverside Drive where for some unaccountable reason he had decided to augment the scotch with mint juleps. The management, desirous of pleasing the city's first citizen, must have at least doubled the bourbon ration. All I know is that for the first time in my life, I actually reeled.

The dinner finished and washed down with a number of juleps, we left the restaurant and staggered into Fiorello's famous limousine. The chauffeur followed his instructions to a T and deposited us at the designated building. Oblivious

to our reason for being in Flushing and not caring very much, we took seats on the first floor facing the water and waited for something to happen. The committee members, having given up on the Mayor, went about their business on the floor above us. Finally, their agenda exhausted, they came down the stairs led by their chairman, Grover Whalen, and Percy Straus. They neither asked for nor were given explanations for the two of us seated with our feet on the balcony rails fascinated by the fireworks display below us.

More typical of our evenings together would be a quiet dinner at home prepared by the faithful housekeeper, Juanita. A native of Barbados, Juanita was a huge woman whose laughter was the sun itself. The mere appearance of her beloved "Major" would bring on a smile of enjoyment that would spread across the broad expanse of her lovely face. Every time I visited the Mansion, I would go directly to the kitchen to greet Juanita, who had won my heart with her poems and her mashed potatoes. I will never forget the picture of Juanita whipping potatoes until they were white as Mount Everest and fluffy as down. She wrote little moralistic rhymes about the goodness of life, which she loved to recite with appropriate gestures. Despite her tendency toward disorganization and showmanship, Fiorello delighted in Juanita's company. When he made our first before-dinner drink, he would always pour one for her, which she would solemnly accept and take back to her kitchen. After La Guardia's death, Juanita came to work for me at my home. Almost religiously I would share my first drink with her and listen without interruption to the recitation of her poems.

On Saturday nights La Guardia would don a complete chef's outfit and take over the kitchen. He had a real talent for cooking, which he insisted was an Italian heritage. During

the war he would buy inexpensive cuts of chuck steak and do wonders with it. He would build a stack of these thin steaks which he seasoned subtly and cooked with an exquisite sense of timing. Over this he would pour a gravy of his own concoction, add a mixture of peppers and onions, also his own recipe, and top it all off with Juanita's whipped potatoes. We ate like kings on what Fiorello called "poor man's steak."

But all was not fun and ribaldry with this lovable, cantankerous genius. La Guardia could switch to his serious vein in a flash, and then all was city business. His memory was photographic and his mind if anything too quick, one source of his impatience with others. I was with him when he dictated the entire city budget of many millions for the coming year in all its myriad categories, with only a few guiding figures before him.

An aviator in World War I who saw active service in the infant U.S. Air Corps in Italy, he foresaw the development of air travel long before others. At breakfast one morning he sketched on the back of an envelope the plan for what was eventually to become La Guardia Airport. Armed with this "blueprint" we raced out to Flushing, where his description of intended runways and structures made them appear vividly before my eyes.

La Guardia's attitude toward the responsibilities of the mayor's office was simple and direct. He felt that he was the personal custodian of the city, and whether it was a subway accident, a strike, the opening of the summer concerts at Lewisohn Stadium or a fire, it was his duty to attend personally and to supervise. He would carry this to extremes which I would have thought strange for anyone but Fiorello. It was not unusual for him, for instance, to hop out of a car

to pick up a piece of paper and remark with a sad shake of his head on the carelessness and lack of respect for others of his fellow New Yorkers. On several occasions he would have me stop my car and let him out for a gentle finger-pointing lecture to children playing in the street. This would inevitably end with a personally led trip to the nearest playground.

I was often the victim of his civic virtue. In the many instances when he would ride in my car, an open model which he dearly enjoyed, I would get back at him for having been the butt of some of his jokes by pretending to miss traffic lights. His face would grow red and livid with anger. Threatening to leave the car, he would scream, "Goddammit, we're going to be locked up." And he meant it.

His revenge came one night as we drove in my car to attend an opening night at the Lewisohn Stadium. Somehow I lost my way in the maze of one-way streets in the City College area. This culminated in my driving down one such street in the wrong direction. Naturally, a traffic policeman was waiting for me. He didn't bother to look at my passenger but embarked on a lecture which was generously colored by unprintable language. I tried to direct his attention to the Mayor's side of the car, but when I said something about the Mayor's presence, Fiorello shushed me with the command "*Schweig . . . ruhig* (be quiet)." Suddenly the officer recognized his boss and began to sputter apologies. Fiorello hopped out of the car, however, cut him off with an order, "Officer, lock him up," and strode off in the direction of the stadium.

Finally, with the assistance of several policemen, including some on horseback, I backed and filled until I was pointed in the right direction for parking. I didn't know

that La Guardia and a group of other city officials had gathered to watch my frantic efforts until I heard his high-pitched voice announce to the crowd around the gate, "What this guy needs is Randall's Island to turn around in."

I finally escaped from my audience and reached my seat in time to hear the Mayor ask Minnie Guggenheimer, who then as now ran the Stadium Concerts, for an extra fiddle "... so that I can throw out the first violin."

The most famous of La Guardia's excursions into grass-roots management of the city's affairs was his regular attendance at fires. Most people had the impression that he was merely a fire buff taking advantage of his position to get a first-row seat. Nothing could be further from the truth. La Guardia felt that it was his job to be there and he had given instructions to be called whenever possible when a fire broke out. On many occasions he arrived ahead of the firemen.

I was present with him at several fires and I can attest that he was strictly business. In fact, at one serious conflagration he demonstrated amazing fearlessness. A low-flying airplane had crashed into the lofty Empire State Building, setting off an explosion and a fire high above the city streets. A fire door separated the affected area from the rest of the building, and it was necessary to go through this barrier to fight the fire. No one knew what dangers lay behind the closed door, and the fire chiefs were discussing the best way to approach it when La Guardia settled the argument by shouting "Let's go!" and dashed through the door without a moment's hesitation. Fortunately he suffered no injuries, but the thought of such a possibility would not have deterred him.

When Gracie Mansion was established as the permanent home for the mayors of New York City, Robert Moses, the

Park Commissioner, secured some fine old prints of antiquated fire-fighting equipment which he had hung on the walls of the Mayor's study. Many visitors kidded La Guardia about them as well as his addiction to fires, but their remarks fell short of their mark: he never could see any humor in fires.

An incident involving a fire marked one of the earlier meetings of La Guardia and Arturo Toscanini. It took place at a dinner for the two men at my home. In the middle of dinner, La Guardia was summoned to a fire by telephone. Excusing himself, he dashed off. I could sense great envy in Toscanini, who was dying to go with the Mayor but couldn't bring himself to ask to be taken. If the Mayor acted like the leader of the brigade without whom no fire could be quenched, the Maestro reverted to the irrepressible boy who wanted to chase the fire engine. In my many years of close association with Toscanini, the world's greatest conductor, no artist ever received the adulation from him that he bestowed on the Mayor when the latter returned from the fire to wash up and resume his meal.

The relationship between the two Italians grew in warmth, and I played host to them at many dinners. These amiable and sometimes hilarious get-togethers were often interrupted by the Maestro leaving the table to go to the piano to illustrate some musical point. Best of all, my old yearning for friendship with Toscanini was now satisfied. My enthusiasm and the knowledge I was able to reveal of the inner meaning of many of his musical interpretations served to bind us in a friendship which lasted until his death in 1957.

To prepare a menu to suit both of these prima donnas would challenge the skill of the White House chef or the major-domo of a similar establishment accustomed to visiting royalty. Toscanini was held in check by Margherita De

Vecchi, his trusted friend and protector. She insisted that no matter what the others ate, the Maestro must have a thick soup, Italian bread sticks and blandly cooked chicken. La Guardia, on the other hand, was a gourmet for whom nothing was too exotic.

In advance of one dinner, La Guardia had mentioned that he would enjoy goulash, Viennese style, a dish for which Hortense's Aunt Kathie, a fabulous cook, was justly famous. In response to this opportunity for a "command performance," she came from Newark two days in advance, armed with her own utensils. The actual preparation of her goulash was begun twenty-four hours before the dinner.

The goulash was brought to the table in a giant cauldron. The lid off, the air in the room was immediately redolent with the aroma of herbs which she had blended so skillfully in her magic potion. Toscanini sat impassive until finally, when his pallid chicken was placed before him, he could not restrain himself. Shoving aside his plate, he demanded and ate a large portion of the goulash, to the delight of Fiorello who cheered him on to a second helping—another victory for La Guardia.

The two men shared a passion for red wine with their meals and a fine cognac to top them off. In preparation for each of our dinners, I would search the stores of New York's finest wine dealers for an ancient bottle of cognac, which would be sipped until long after dinner. After two or three snifters the Maestro would recall and resume a battle he had fought long before with an erstwhile friend, Gatti-Casazza, general manager of the Metropolitan Opera Company, who had first brought him to the United States. Toscanini had enjoyed his years at the Met where his baton directed, among others, Caruso, Galli-Curci, Ruffo and

Melba, but he had resigned in a huff after a violent battle. His temper fired by the brandy, the Maestro would wax eloquent on the subject of the perfidy and stupidity of his former colleague, climaxing his invective by screaming *"Stupido . . . stupido."* Thereupon, he would get to his feet, throw his napkin, and sometimes his glass, on the floor and stalk out of the room—a dramatic curtain.

No reminiscence about the beloved Fiorello would be complete without mention of a man who helped him reshape the City of New York—Robert Moses, Park Commissioner and the Keeper of the Keys to more municipal and state jobs than any other man on record. It would be impossible for me to recall two more independent, irascible and explosive men, but together they achieved amazing results.

Moses was Al Smith's discovery, but it was La Guardia who best exploited his many talents to the benefit of the city. La Guardia gave him the greatest leeway and it was La Guardia who met him most often in head-on collision.

Many meetings between La Guardia and Moses took place at breakfast at Gracie Mansion. Most often these sessions would begin peacefully with the two men amiable as kittens. But by the time the scrambled eggs had come and gone, they would be in the heat of battle with Moses usually even more vituperative than the Mayor.

A frequent climax to these clashes would be Moses rising to his feet, his lower jaw clenched and jutting forward in the best Mussolini style. He would slam his fist on the table and announce, "Very well, I resign."

This treatment has since been given to a long list of mayors and governors who have tried to harness the temperament and genius of Robert Moses. But Fiorello La Guardia, in his time, was determined to do something about it.

Riding down to City Hall after one such detonation which had been triggered by some slight difference of opinion, the Mayor sat hunched in the corner of the limousine frowning in concentration. Suddenly the frown gave way to a radiant smile and he said, "Come downtown with me, Ira. I want to show you something." He had been giving me a lift to my office, and by this time I was far behind my scheduled program for the morning, but I went.

When we arrived at City Hall he hopped out of the car and ran up the stairs as fast as his bowlegs would carry him. Ringing violently for his secretary, he ordered her to get a large sheet of paper. He then ruled lines on which a formal statement was hand-lettered in Old English script reading, "I, Robert Moses, do hereby resign as Park Commissioner of New York City." More lines, some forty of them, were then ruled on the left-hand side of the paper down to the bottom of the page. These were for the insertion of dates, with similar lines on the right side for signatures. The job done, the paper was rolled up diploma-style and tied with blue ribbon. The Mayor then sent it to Moses' office with a brief note: "Dear Bob, please use this. It will save you time in the future. Fiorello."

Mayor La Guardia had many reservations about Bob Moses. He didn't like his political thinking, which he regarded as reactionary. Furthermore, he thought Moses was a snob and because of the grandiose nature of some of his ideas, a luxury. "New York would go broke with two Bob Moseses," Fiorello once confided to me.

But in spite of these differences and the clash of their volatile temperaments, these men had deep respect for each other. La Guardia's determination to overlook Moses' arrogance and intransigence was a difficult, self-imposed disci-

pline based on a desire to improve the city's parks, roads and playgrounds. His forbearance has permitted the citizens of New York to become the beneficiaries of Moses' unquestioned genius.

My own connection with Fiorello La Guardia was deeply personal. In his words, I was a "kid" when we first met. It would be difficult for me to enumerate the many things I learned in my long, rewarding friendship with the Little Flower. La Guardia entrusted me with many important assignments, certain of which formed the basis for my eventual career in the service of the city and our federal government.

Chapter VI

By 1935 the Hitler juggernaut was gaining momentum. He had gone into the Rhineland against nothing more than a feeble protest from the French and British. The Third Reich was rearming, and all the while Hitler was vitiating the will of the German people, clouding their vision and turning the screw tightly to destroy the intellectual life of the country.

Men and women who had been the stars in Germany's firmament of literature, music and painting were being rooted out, evicted and even murdered. It was apparent that the inferiority and meager background of Hitler's clique of mediocrities and gangsters couldn't begin to cope with Germany's true intellectuals, the teachers, artists and writers. Thus, to the shallow, twisted, provincial minds of the men of the self-anointed Master Race, the intelligentsia constituted a living reproach as well as a constant threat of a revived, articulate opposition.

Many of the intellectual leaders who had lifted Germany to world eminence were Jews or of Jewish descent—Albert Einstein, Lion Feuchtwanger, Sigmund Freud, Stefan Zweig,

Emil Ludwig, Thomas Mann and others of similar talent and distinction. Hitler inaugurated a special program to isolate and terrorize these great men. The more gifted and celebrated they were, the more urgent was their need for escape.

At the New School for Social Research in New York, Alvin Johnson, its president, had created a plan to offer a haven and teaching positions in a congenial environment to these distinguished European scholars who were being hounded and chased from their rooted environs. Johnson saw an open door to these savants not only as a defiance of Hitler's drive to eradicate free thought but as an opportunity for the enrichment of cultural life in the United States.

This was the blueprint for the University in Exile. Starting with eighteen of the political and social scientists exiled by the Nazis, a faculty was to be built whose eminence in these fields would challenge those of the world's greatest universities.

The New School held special meaning for me. I had discovered it when I was very young on one of my frequent jaunts from across the river in Newark—trips I made in search of the intellectual stimulation I had not found at Johns Hopkins. I attended lectures there and struck up a friendship with the celebrated Viennese pioneer in psychoanalysis, Professor Alfred Adler. After each of his lectures, I would dine with him until the early hours of the morning. He, too, was alone in the big city.

Even now I can recall his heavily accented injunction to "find the rizzon" when I asked him about the behavior of certain people who had betrayed my trust. It was then that I developed my deep and lasting curiosity about the mysterious world of the subconscious. I am still convinced that the

study of our inner selves is at least as important a new frontier as the search for new worlds in outer space.

Johnson's plans for the University in Exile took root quickly, exciting the interest of many of the nation's staunch liberals. Supreme Court Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, who had never before lent his name to any sponsoring committee, became a member of the Board. His associates included, among other impressive personalities, John Dewey, Charles Burlingham, George A. Plimpton, Felix Frankfurter, Edwin R. Seligman and Herbert Bayard Swope. It was an illustrious group, but they were men whose busy careers precluded active participation. The Board lacked young men whose vitality and direct involvement were essential to the immediate task of raising funds and providing dynamic leadership for this gallant project. I was elected Chairman of the Board and set to work to bring in this new blood.

With Johnson's guidance I was able to recruit a top-flight group of men of my own generation. All in their early thirties, their more important accomplishments lay ahead of them. They included Benjamin Buttenwieser, a partner in Kuhn, Loeb & Company; Thomas S. Lamont of J. P. Morgan & Company; William McChesney Martin, Jr., now Chairman of the Federal Reserve Board, and Francis T. Plimpton, currently assistant to Ambassador Adlai Stevenson at the United Nations. It was an all-star team and got the University off the ground in record time.

I should mention one important exception in this galaxy of young hopefuls. He was Hiram Halle, a more mature man of considerable wealth who, in response to a routine mimeographed fund-raising letter, sent in a check for $50,000. After becoming a member of the Board, Halle gave his personal guaranty to underwrite the school's budget for two years. I

have never ceased to wonder at the capacity for generosity and wholehearted support for new ideas among men of good will.

At the suggestion of Professor Frankfurter, I invited a young lady to visit one of the Board meetings as an observer. She was Dorothy Backer, daughter of the late Mortimer Schiff, and had evinced some interest in our plans. At the meeting I hastened to make a luncheon engagement with her for the next day.

A strikingly beautiful and aristocratic woman, Mrs. Backer was still at that time extremely shy, a natural outgrowth of her cloistered youthful years. But one sensed underneath her quiet demeanor the flame of social awareness and humanity that was to draw her into a life marked by usefulness on the civic and political scene.

The next morning proved to be a busy one, and I left my office at the last moment. Rushing out of the building, I jumped into the first cab and urged the driver to get to the Plaza Hotel as quickly as his engine and conscience would permit. I dashed up the impressive front steps of the hotel full of apologies for my lateness, further embarrassed by the discovery that all I had in my pockets was forty cents.

Covered with apologies, I cadged a dollar from Mrs. Backer. That took care of the cabbie, but when I returned to the lobby, Mrs. Backer informed me that she, too, had not checked her cash before leaving the house and that had been her last dollar bill. Between us, our capital added up to seventy-five cents.

So, the young department store executive and his millionairess guest walked around the corner to a cafeteria and with great care planned a luncheon that could be covered by their meager resources. Dorothy was a great sport,

however, and somehow our mutual financial problems relaxed any inhibitions I may have had. I launched into a projection of the importance of the university's program. Then, with appropriate prose, I described the high level of the membership of our Board until I came to the name of Justice Holmes, who had died just a few days earlier. Carried away, I then indulged in what may have been the worst example of hyperbole ever uttered.

"I am offering you the chair of Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes," I said, with an air that carried with it the sound of muted trumpets.

Dorothy Backer had up to that time led a sheltered life, but even as I made this preposterous proposition, I had an uncomfortable feeling that her carefully composed features were restraining a smile rather than tears of gratitude. But she didn't let it affect her. Then and there, seated at our cafeteria table and despite the momentary depletion of her cash resources, she pledged an initial gift of $25,000, a figure which would be increased in the near future. Many years later, at a dinner party, she entertained our fellow guests at my expense with a colorful retelling of my grandiose offer. It would seem that the graciousness of the young girl who was to become one of New York's leading civic figures, as well as the publisher of the *New York Post,* concealed an acute perceptivity.

Aside from her own generous support of the University in Exile, Dorothy brought into our fold other young people of similar sympathies. In particular, she enlisted Dorothy Paley, then wife of William S. Paley, head of the Columbia Broadcasting System; also Mrs. David Levy and her sister Marion, daughters of Julius Rosenwald. Marion met and married Max

Ascoli, a scholar we had brought over from Italy. Today he is the editor and publisher of *The Reporter.*

Our efforts resulted in the rescue of many of the world's leading intellectuals, including Gerhard Cohn, Max Wertheimer, Frieda Wunderlich. But the most distinguished member of our faculty was Albert Einstein. On his arrival in the United States a welcoming dinner was held, chaired by Felix Frankfurter and attended by no less than fifteen presidents of major universities who individually paid tribute to Professor Einstein. It was my privilege to read to this distinguished assemblage the credo of the University in Exile:

> The constitution of the University in Exile is a landmark in academic history. It is the first constitution which grants a graduate faculty complete powers in self-government, electing its own officers, determining its own curriculum, with full powers for the promotion and election of its new members, with authority for dismissal only for causes touching upon scholarly honor and integrity, including adherence to any party or faction which opposes freedom of thought and teaching.

Mrs. Backer, in turn, involved me in another movement for the rescue and placement of intellectual refugees from Germany. Bronislaw Hubermann, the celebrated German violinist who had found refuge in the United States, was at the head of a group which was organizing a symphony orchestra in Palestine. The new symphony was being built around a nucleus of first-rank musicians, all refugees who had made their way to Palestine.

At Dorothy's invitation, I attended a meeting of the sponsoring committee and, before long, volunteered to enlist the support of Arturo Toscanini. Just the inclusion of his

name would be a triumph of prestige. I suggested that Hubermann join me in a visit to the Maestro to outline the plans for the orchestra and to get the Maestro's consent to use his name.

Hubermann had for many years been one of the musical darlings of Germany. A vibrant personality with a powerful intellect, he wielded a strong influence in European artistic circles. Not the handsomest man in the world, his appearance was further marred by his decidedly crossed eyes. It was a cruel joke among musicians that his affliction had come from keeping one eye on his violin and the other on the box office.

By appointment, the Maestro, always the soul of charm, graciously received us in the small drawing room in his apartment atop the Hotel Astor. Hubermann, sitting in a large chair opposite the Maestro, carefully outlined his plan. I watched the Maestro as he listened attentively but noticed that his eyes had fastened on Hubermann's lower trouser-legs and shoes, as through held in fascination. Following his eyes I observed that the pants, European style, narrowed tightly, and became especially short above the ankles. Hubermann concluded his presentation with a list of celebrities who had agreed to sponsor the inaugural concert to be held in the following spring. He then began haltingly to propose to Toscanini that "It would be wonderful, Maestro, if we could count on you." Before he could finish the sentence the Maestro interrupted and said: "Fine. I will conduct the first concert." He then stood up abruptly, shook hands with Hubermann who sputtered some staccato efforts at "thanks," led him to the door, bade him good-by and asked me to remain for a few minutes.

As the door closed behind Hubermann, the Maestro called for Carla, his wife, then paced the room repeating "*Che pan-*

talonil Che pantalonil" pointing to where Hubermann had sat. He then exploded in Italian that in all his born days he had never seen such strange, ill-fitting trousers, exhorting me, "How could such an eminent violinist wear such terrible trousers?" The Maestro was impeccable in the fit and unobtrusiveness of his clothes. A sartorial off-beat apparently could offend his sensibilities as much as one who offended his musical taste.

At tea, the Maestro's spontaneous offer to conduct the first concert of the newly formed orchestra was not even discussed. The next spring the Palestine Symphony Orchestra was inaugurated in Jerusalem. Arturo Toscanini was its first conductor.

During all this frantic activity, in 1935 I had changed jobs. Joseph P. Day was New York City's virtuoso real estate auctioneer, but I am certain that he never planned the incidental music which accompanied the negotiations for my move to Saks Fifth Avenue. Day, a member of the Board of Directors of the Gimbel chain which controlled Saks, had invited me to lunch at the Ambassador Hotel to meet Bernard Gimbel, head of the chain, and his nephew Adam.

The two Gimbels were urging me to accept the vice-presidency of Saks to be second in command to Adam, president of the store, and we were just discussing terms when the sounds of one of my favorite pieces of music, the *Rosamunde Overture* of Franz Schubert, filled the air. I stopped in the middle of a sentence to concentrate on the piano, violin and cello trio who were playing like angels. At the conclusion of the piece I applauded and, having excused myself, left the table to shake the hand of each of the players.

When I returned to my hosts, who seemed bemused and

startled by my strange, unbusinesslike actions, Adam asked me to name the terms I would accept. Elated, almost intoxicated by the music, I outlined a list of what I considered the most unlikely demands. I even included an annual six-week trip to Europe (presumably to hear music).

I can't honestly say whether the Gimbels were affected by the Schubert, impressed by my unorthodox attitude or just eager to have me fill the post, but they did agree to my conditions, including the trip. I moved ten blocks uptown from Lord and Taylor to become vice-president of Saks Fifth Avenue.

My new responsibilities included merchandising and store management. It was my first experience with retailing based on snob appeal. Stated simply, the policies of the store as created by Adam Gimbel were based on a formula which called for the buying of enormous assortments of specialized goods, preferably in Europe. This insured a minimum of competition and a maximum profit.

The next summer I took time off from my visit to the Salzburg Music Festival in Austria to find a source of skiing equipment and apparel. Saks Fifth Avenue had decided that America was ready for skiing.

Toscanini was still conducting at Salzburg in those days. When I announced at lunch one day at his home that I was going into the city to purchase ski equipment, he offered to join me. Naturally, I was honored and pleased when he bounced into the front seat of his car and ordered the chauffeur to rush us to the Lanz store in Salzburg.

The Maestro followed me into the store and solemnly examined each piece of merchandise as I put it down. He was so entranced by his unaccustomed participation in the business world that he never noticed the crowd gathered outside

to stare in at him. Quickly realizing that the prices at the shop were moderate, I asked in a matter-of-fact manner, "How much for your store—lock, stock and barrel—and the use of your name?"

When the deal was concluded by a solemn handshake with Lanz, Toscanini almost jumped with childish delight. This break from his routine and escape from his satellites exhilarated him. He drove off in a more buoyant mood than as if he had just conducted a major performance of one of his beloved Verdi operas.

The job at Saks gave me more money and privileges than I had ever previously enjoyed. While I never became completely adjusted to the high-style atmosphere of Saks, I carried on for some four years and can count among my dubious triumphs the authorship of a slogan which certainly ranks high in the lexicon of the snob world—"*very* Saks Fifth Avenue."

It was at this time that I was able to realize a dream that had its origin in my early childhood in Baltimore when I was still young enough to be led by the hand to attend my first chamber music concert—the Flonzaley Quartet—at the Peabody Institute. With Hortense's help, I created the New Friends of Music.

The idea had begun to germinate when attendance at Sunday chamber music in my home on Gramercy Park expanded beyond the capacity of my living room. It was clear to me that there was a need for some public vehicle to expose to larger audiences the basic literature of chamber music, heretofore considered esoteric and reserved for erudite musicians and the musical elite.

Before embarking on this venture, I decided to invite a

group of leading musicians and music managers to my home. I opened the evening with the Gordon String Quartet playing a late Beethoven work. At the conclusion I outlined my plan for the New Friends and asked for opinions. Everyone tried to discourage me. Most of those present thought the idea was unrealistic. The only dissent came not from a musician but a playwright, an old friend and music lover, Elmer Rice. Finally I went around the room and took a vote—twenty to one against. Announcing, "Now I am sure that I'm right, I'm going ahead," I plunged in.

Since this was breaking new ground in the concert world, and considered outrageously impractical and idealistic by professional managers, we went all the way with many daring innovations. A Statement of Aims was published which promised complete cycles of the works of several composers each year. In addition to listing our sixteen programs in advance, we presented a series of ground rules for what I termed "music making" instead of "concert going." There were to be no encores, no little pieces, no virtuosos, no flowers, no latecomers, no committees, no teas, no intermissions and no single seat sales. Town Hall was to be the scene of the series, and 5:30 P.M., a convenient time as well as an inexpensive one, was set for the beginning of each concert.

All artists appeared in the same way, without special fanfare or treatment. And they agreed in advance to play designated programs which had been mailed with readable notes to our subscribers.

I gambled still further by keeping the prices down, the majority set at one dollar per concert for the series. A large block of tickets was reserved for music students at twenty-five cents. There were no free tickets, not even for the press.

We were not interested in public criticism; nonetheless the critics came to enjoy the music.

There were many occasions on which the rules I had laid down for the New Friends were objected to by temperamental artists and their managers. My severest test came from Mme. Lotte Lehmann, my favorite lieder singer, an artist who brought everything she sang to life. There are few artists capable of understanding and projecting the great lieder cycles of Schubert, Schumann and Brahms.

In 1937 after one of her concerts for the New Friends, I went back to the artist's room and asked her if she would sing Schubert's *Winterreise* for us the following year. This supreme classic based on Müller's epic poem requires an entire concert. She looked aghast and said: "That would take me three years to learn." "Very well," I retorted. "You are engaged to sing it in 1940."

True to the plan, the work was announced for a concert in the 1940/41 series and the hall was filled to the last seat as well as standing room. Arriving fifteen minutes before the concert to check up on details and planning, I found a mild insurrection going on backstage. Mme. Lehmann's personal manager insisted that the overflow be permitted to be seated on the stage, that a red rug be placed from the artist's room to the center of the stage and that flowers were to be handed her in the intermission and at the conclusion.

All three demands were in direct violation of my rules, and I made no exceptions. Music was music, and all outside trappings, especially ones that might intrude on the mood of the concert, were taboo. I pleaded with Mme. Lehmann, who adamantly announced that she refused to go out on the stage unless these conditions were met. I started my concerts on the split second at 5:34 P.M. and it was already 5:25. I could

hear the buzz of anticipation of the full house beyond the curtain. "If you refuse to go on the stage, in exactly nine minutes I am going out and announce why the concert is off," I said, looking at my watch. "Would you like to come out with me to make sure that I say it correctly?" She glared at me, her eyes on fire, and said: "Very well, I will give up on the rug and the flowers, but I insist on permitting people to sit on the stage." "Why?" I implored. "Because I will be lonely," she replied. But I held my ground and she finally gave in.

An adoring audience, unaware of the minor drama that had been played behind the curtain and the near-miss of the concert, tumultuously greeted her appearance on the stage. The great artist warmed up to the demands of the noble score and as she reached the climax soared to a rarely felt transcendence. At the last notes the audience thundered its applause. I ran backstage to impart my enthusiasm before her admirers arrived to besiege her. "You were magnificent," I exclaimed over the roar of applause still echoing from the hall.

"Yes, but I was alone," she replied quickly, not willing to lose the argument even under the spell of her triumph.

"You were not alone, Madame Lehmann; Schubert was with you," I told her firmly.

From the very beginning the New Friends of Music was a success. Even before our opening concert on November 9, 1936, ninety-six per cent of Town Hall's 1500-seat capacity was sold out for the season. Today I can still thrill to the recollection of that first night. When I arrived, a long line had already formed outside Town Hall to hear the *C Sharp Minor Quartet* of Beethoven, perhaps the most lofty and abstract piece in the entire literature.

At the end of the first year I published a full statement of our income and costs, to prove my theory that "there is nothing so practical as idealism." That year, in spite of paying normal concert fees to artists such as Artur Schnabel, Lotte Lehmann, the Budapest Quartet, Elizabeth Schumann and others of similar eminence, I lost only $408. The deficits mounted in later years with increased fees and larger musical groups. Of course I received no compensation, nor did we carry the supernumeraries and outside trappings that traditionally have burdened organizations like the Philharmonic and the Metropolitan Opera Company.

For sixteen years, until 1952, when my preoccupation with business and government service as well as a disruption of my personal life combined to suspend the concerts, the New Friends achieved many artistic triumphs. We even organized our own orchestra with Fritz Stiedry, former conductor of the Berlin Staatsoper, as its director. Not only did we present all the major chamber music works including twelve Mozart piano concerti with Schnabel and Rudolf Serkin as soloists, but I commissioned a new *Kammersymphonie* by Arnold Schönberg. On a trip to Budapest, one of the descendants of the Esterhazys, Joseph Haydn's patrons, lent me the original manuscripts of ten of the Master's symphonies, unplayed in modern times, which were gathering dust in the vaults of the family's ancient palace. After they were scored for the orchestra by Alfred Einstein, cousin of the illustrious Albert, they were reintroduced in a concert series at Carnegie Hall and recorded by RCA. They were then made available for performance in the public domain.

Taking a leaf out of my boyhood experience where the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra gave their last rehearsals in

the high schools, I arranged for "rehearsal concerts" of the orchestra in New York City's high schools. The guest speaker in the intermission of the first concert was my great and by now old friend of music, Mayor La Guardia.

During this period, the late Annie Friedberg, manager of artists, had been pleading with me to engage a new quartet which had been winning fame in Europe. I had a rule not to include artists whom I had not heard, but after listening to several records that she sent me, I immediately engaged the group for two concerts. It was the Budapest String Quartet.

The day before the concert I had a phone call from the immigration officials at Ellis Island who informed me that the quartet had arrived, but since their papers were not quite in order, they were being detained. I had to get them off the island by Sunday morning before the concert. In desperation I phoned the Mayor at his home on Sunday.

"Coming to the concert today?" I asked him.

"Yes," he said. "Why?"

"You *think* you are," I replied and then went on to explain about the detention of the quartet, suggesting that his friend Ed Corsi, in charge at Ellis Island, might help. Tickled by my discomfiture, he laughed and hung up.

After repeated efforts I got him back on the phone and he whispered, as though including me in a plot, "Ira! I've got it. Why bother with all the fuss? You and I can take a boat over to the Island and have the concert over there all to ourselves," Again he hung up. I moaned. But later he phoned Corsi, and the quartet was released for the one appearance at Town Hall with a marshal standing in the artists' room ready to whisk them back to Ellis Island after the concert.

Many young American artists had their debut at the con-

certs, and an immortal singer with a golden voice, the English mezzo-soprano Kathleen Ferrier, first performed in America for the New Friends of Music.

In 1941 we decided to include contemporary composers in our series for the first time. Music has never been a matter of period or chronology for me. It is either good or bad, whenever it was written.

The Juilliard String Quartet, a youthful group with an affinity for this new idiom, was engaged to play all of the six quartets of Béla Bartók. The enthusiastic reception to this music was a pleasant surprise to me. Our audience had been steeped in the classics, and I was not sure how they would take to the moderns. I learned from this experience that this new language of music, built with new combinations and sonorities, must be performed by musicians who are educated to think in terms which are essentially youthful.

Béla Bartók's agent in New York approached me and asked if we would introduce the composer's newest chamber composition at one of our concerts. I agreed, and it turned out to be a sonata for two pianos and percussion instruments which include three timpani, xylophone, side drum with snares, side drum without snares, cymbal suspended, pair of cymbals, base drum, triangle and tam-tam. It looked so interesting that we decided to open our next season with this world première.

The mere physical job of assembling and making the proper arrangement for all these instruments on the stage was a problem, not to mention the difficulty in securing all first-class musicians. I decided to invite Bartók, who was in the country, for tea. He and his wife were to be the pianists, so the placing of the instruments and the rehearsal plans

could be settled right with him. Besides, this was an opportunity to meet one of the great composers of our time.

Bartók and his manager arrived at the appointed hour at our apartment. He turned out to be even more ascetic-looking than his photographs. White-haired, with aristocratic features, he stared into space with his large, luminous eyes. Politely he took his tea. When questions were put to him about the composition or if he had any desires in the arrangement of instruments, he pointed to his manager.

Efforts to engage him in conversation in French or German, which I knew he spoke, were fruitless. He stared straight ahead without changing expression. He looked as if he were in a trance.

Everything was amiable; his manager answered all necessary questions, arrangements in infinite detail for the rehearsal were made, and when they were finished Mr. Bartók arose stiffly, shook hands without changing expression, bowed and left.

The performance turned out to be a spectacular success. As the curtains parted, revealing an assortment of percussion instruments of every variety with men standing behind them ready to set them in motion, the audience burst into applause which was uproariously repeated at the end of the concerto. But there is no doubt that this composer speaks only through his music.

I had urged Artur Schnabel in our sixth year to repeat all thirty-two of the Beethoven Sonatas. "Why not all of the Schubert?" he countered. "That would interest me." I count his performance of the entire Schubert piano literature in eight concerts as one of the high-water marks of music in this country.

Our catalog of artists and memorable performances is too

long for reprinting on these pages; though it has been nine years since the last concert, I still regard this as a temporary hiatus. Some day, perhaps soon, the New Friends of Music will be born again to give the best in music to all who will want to hear it. I stand by my original concept, "that people will listen to all things, but will prefer the best."

My heavy schedule at Saks and my direct involvement in all the details of the New Friends of Music made this one of the busiest periods of my career, but my deeper interest still lay in the tragic circumstances which were inexorably leading us into world conflict. This embroiled me in one of the most critical battles in my public life. Hostilities commenced immediately after the first announcement that Wilhelm Furtwängler, "First State Conductor" of the Berlin State Opera, had been engaged to replace Arturo Toscanini as Music Director of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra.

Toscanini's resignation from the Philharmonic was befogged by many unanswered questions. Even I, closer to the Maestro than most, could only surmise, as there was no love lost between Toscanini and Arthur Judson, the orchestra's manager.

Toscanini's departure and the signing of Furtwängler was even more significant than the loss to New York's music lovers of their idol. The two conductors represented philosophies which typified the basic conflict that was dividing the world. Toscanini, the fiery lover of freedom, had cut short his career in Italy by refusing to join the legions of Mussolini, the "sawdust Caesar." Furtwängler bowed and scraped before Hitler and his stooges.

A few months earlier Toscanini had led the resignations of eleven international artists from the Wagner Festival at Bay-

reuth, Germany, as protest against the persecution of Jewish musicians and others in Germany. In the cancellation of his engagement, Toscanini wrote to Frau Winifred Wagner, the composer's daughter: "The lamentable events which have wounded my feelings both as man and as artist have not up to this moment changed, despite my hopes. It is my duty today to break the silence that I have imposed upon myself for the last two months and to inform you that for my, yours and for everybody else's tranquillity it is better not to think any more of my going to Bayreuth. With unchanged sentiment of affectionate friendship toward the entire Wagner family, I am yours, Arturo Toscanini."

And this at the same moment that Furtwängler, the recipient of many Nazi honors, had acquiesced to the removal of so-called non-Aryan musicians from his orchestra in Berlin.

In addition to the affront to the general public, I thought that to bring in such a man to conduct the major orchestra of the city with the largest Jewish community in the world demonstrated a callous disregard for the sensitivities of others that demanded an immediate and forceful protest. I phoned Felix Warburg, the banker and art patron who had originally been designated by the Board to extend the invitation to Furtwängler. My objection as I expressed it to Mr. Warburg was made not merely as a Jew but as a music lover. For my pains I was told, in polite terms of course, that the decision had already been taken by the Board and that it was too late to rescind it.

I found myself fighting upstream. When I tried to organize a protest committee, I was joined only by the "regulars" who would come out for all liberal causes. The leading lay figures in the music world did not respond, and I soon learned that the prime reason for the participation of most of these

"patrons" was largely a matter of improving their social status. They resented my disturbing the security of their well-ordered lives by bringing political issues into music. I was reminded of those who didn't want politics in the department store business.

Immediately prior to this impasse I had been approached as a possible member of the Philharmonic Board, and I had many friends, I thought, among their members. But when I attempted to reach them to present my point of view to them, only Minnie Guggenheimer, who brought along Edward Bernays, the public relations man, would have dinner with me and listen to me; at that they only tried to dissuade me from my course.

My telegrams to the members of the Board were ignored. But the press who received copies of my wires pounced on the story and gave it front-page coverage. William Henderson of the *New York Sun*, dean of the city's music critics, devoted a complete column to the elephant-hide insensitivity of the Board. But I was still fighting a one-man battle.

The first Philharmonic Concert after the Furtwängler engagement had been announced was to be one of Toscanini's valedictory performances. I was resolved to attend despite warnings of snubs and even stronger insults I might have to suffer. I don't recall how word of this got to Dorothy Backer, a niece of Felix Warburg. She called me and asked me to take her to the concert. It was her way of standing beside me, and I quickly and gratefully accepted her suggestion.

Dorothy's company helped, as did the sight of a group of pretty young girls pacing up and down in front of Carnegie Hall carrying signs reading "Vote against Hitler and Furtwängler." They also were distributing ballots with places

to check next to the names of the opposing teams, Hitler and Furtwängler versus Toscanini and Music. I admit to having had something to do with this protest, including the suggestion that the girls be pretty. But only at the time of writing these lines did I learn that one of those girls was Anne Foss, a Bostonian of Revolutionary War stock, who apparently took her heritage seriously. I know because she is the present Mrs. Hirschmann.

During the concert intermission, I was snubbed by the people with whom I had met for so many years in the Carnegie lobby. Aside from one or two curt remarks of implied criticism for having stirred up "this mess," no one spoke to me.

Still I was resolved to press my fight and I was heartened when that Saturday morning my secretary told me that two members of the Philharmonic Board were waiting to see me for a moment. I hoped that they had come to join me. Their visit represented a breach in the line set up against me by Arthur Judson, manager of the Philharmonic. However, the best they could do was to advise me, in a paternal vein, against my course. They were still in my office when my phone rang and the unmistakable falsetto of Fiorello La Guardia filled the room. He had succeeded in bringing together in his office representatives of employers' groups and officers of the elevator operators' union then on strike, and squeaked with evident delight. "I've locked these fellows in a room and I won't let them out until they come to an agreement." He added that he was sneaking out to the Metropolitan during the conference to listen to *Fidelio* and wanted me to come along.

In full voice, so as not to leave one syllable unheard by my guests, I answered, "Sorry, Fiorello, you know *Fidelio*

is my favorite but I have to stay here and finish off this Furtwängler fight now that I have them on the run."

"The hell with them," said the Mayor. "I'll help you finish them. Besides, the music will be a shot in the arm for you. We'll meet at two in the Bliss' box but we'll have to sit back so we won't be seen."

Making sure that my visitors would hear the voice of the Mayor by holding the phone away from my ear, I assented, bringing a chuckle from Fiorello and the closing comment, "We'll be listening to music while those guys in my office will have to listen to each other."

Like truants, we sat in the back of the box and relished Beethoven's heroic score. Inwardly I joined the chorus in the first act when, as enchained prisoners struggling for a glimpse of the sun, they sang sadly of their fate. When the sound of horns offstage heralded the liberation of Florestan from the grip of the tyrant Pizzaro, the trumpets seemed to sound for me.

La Guardia was beside himself with glee. "Jimmy Walker would be at the ball game," he whispered. "Here we are at the opera." He had been right, *Fidelio* did give me strength.

But Judson and his acquiescent Board were not on the run, and they displayed no intention of capitulating. They brought to bear their heaviest weapon, financial pressure. Board members who were directors of Gimbel Brothers, the company that controlled Saks Fifth Avenue, appealed to Bernard Gimbel to silence me. They claimed that my activities would make enemies for the store. Mr. Gimbel brought this to my attention in what I must say was not an unkind manner. But I couldn't back down from this fight. All I could promise was that I would try to keep my name out of all publicity. The pressure was beginning to tell on me, and

the cost in time, energy and money, which I alone defrayed, was piling up at an alarming rate. I was not too far from defeat.

Suddenly the miracle we always seek happened. A young lady—I should say angel—by the name of Nora Shea came to my rescue. Secretary to Arthur Judson, she called me and insisted that I have a *sub rosa* lunch with her; she had important information to give me.

Terrified by the enormity of her violation of internal security, she barely whispered when we met in one of those one-flight-up tearooms. "Ira, I was afraid you were cracking. What they have been doing to you in the office is shameful. I just had to speak to you."

Leaning across the table and even more softly than before, she said, "Hold out. Just a few more days are all you need. We are being deluged with cancellations of subscriptions. At this rate they'll have no audience, let alone money. They can't go on."

I was overcome. It was the first indication that I was not alone and that my protest had not gone unheard. Her encouraging intercession will never be forgotten. Why did she risk her job to tell me this? You might call it a case of "Bread on the waters . . ." My only previous contact outside the office with my "angel" was aboard an ocean liner. Bruno Zirato, assistant manager of the Philharmonic, had asked me to introduce her to some people. So I invited her to join a gay group of my friends in a number of parties that shortened the trip across the Atlantic.

Two days after my rendezvous with her, I was overjoyed to receive a gracefully stated, almost fulsome invitation from Felix Warburg to visit him at his Fifth Avenue home. I took special delight in accepting. It ended in my helping draft a

cable to the Philharmonic Board in Furtwängler's name. The next night, pedestrians on Broadway at Times Square must have wondered about a young man who stood, bareheaded, enthralled by the moving letters of the electric sign on the Times Building as they spelled out a headline from the next morning's edition:

FURTWANGLER DECLINES APPOINTMENT AS MUSIC DIRECTOR OF PHILHARMONIC DUE TO ILLNESS

They could not have known that those were not just letters on a moving electric belt; for me they were set to music—a personal paean of triumph.

Chapter VII

By 1938 when Hitler's Wehrmacht marched into little Austria "... to prevent German blood being shed by Germans," I was unalterably committed to the absolute necessity of saving the lives of victims of Nazism. My earlier experience with the University in Exile had taught me that rescues could be accomplished for small numbers of famous and near-famous personalities. Now, I saw the problem to be that of extrication and refuge for the mass of "little men" who could be persecuted and even murdered, unknown to all but their friends and relatives, their passing noted only as statistics.

In the summer of that year, therefore, when an international conference was initiated by President Roosevelt to supplement the ineffectual refugee machinery of the League of Nations, I made an effort to be in Evian, France, the scene of the meeting. Felix Frankfurter saw to it that I was armed with the proper credentials, but convinced me that my interests would be best served if I did not join the delegation officially. He argued that this would leave me free to operate behind the scenes with greater maneuverability and effec-

tiveness. I have since thanked him many times for the wisdom of this counsel.

The fact that thirty-two governments had sent delegations to Evian indicated that finally something concrete would be done to attack this growing problem of so-called "stateless" people. But once again we were to suffer disappointment, and Hitler gained new strength from the inertia of the democracies. In the roll call of nations, only tiny Santo Domingo offered a haven for 100,000 refugees.

The only other positive result of this imposing conclave was the formation of the Intergovernmental Committee for Refugees. And this, I was certain, would be no more than a façade behind which the "civilized" governments could hide their inability to act.

The United States delegation was headed by Myron C. Taylor, former president of the United States Steel Corporation and future ambassador to the Vatican, and included James G. MacDonald, former High Commissioner for Germany. It is still my strong conviction that this delegation must share the blame with Great Britain, France and the other European powers for not having seized this opportunity to save a good share of the millions of people who were to die in the coming holocaust.

Discouraged by the aimlessness and lethargy of the Conference, I sought distraction at the gaming tables at the Evian Casino. There I met two men of good will who shared my lack of enthusiasm for empty speechmaking. One was Clarence Streit, whose "Union Now," an early plan for world government, was in the throes of its birth pains. George Brandt, the other, was there representing Breckinridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State in charge of refugee matters.

Brandt and I made the boat trip across beautiful Lake

Geneva to Lausanne and dolefully compared notes on the futility of the Conference. When he told me that he was leaving for Vienna to make an on-the-scene survey of the situation there for Secretary Long, I joined him with alacrity.

The artificiality and *sang-froid* of the Evian Conference was even more flagrant when viewed against the background of once gay Vienna in the hands of its conquerors and native-born Nazis. The excesses of the Nazi hoodlums in Germany paled by comparison with the downright cruelty I saw on the banks of the Danube. Anti-Semitism in a city whose large indigenous Jewish population had contributed so greatly to its position in the arts and sciences took on new and horrible aspects. By the time Brandt and I arrived on the scene, only weeks after the Anschluss, the yellow badge of shame all Jews were forced to wear was to be seen throughout the city, and most of its wearers were counting the hours before they were to be "transported" to Dachau and similar sites of barbarity and sadism.

I had a personal mission to perform and I decided that I had better act immediately. Before leaving for Europe my wife Hortense had begged me to try to locate and rescue, if possible, members of her father's family still in Austria. Her father, Dr. Siegfried Husserl, originally a native of Vienna, had been a student and a medical doctor there before his migration to the United States. In fact, many years earlier he had been the not-too-successful Latin and mathematics tutor of young Artur Schnabel in Vienna, who was later to exert such a strong influence in my life.

My diplomatic passport won me quick entry at the American Embassy where I found Assistant Secretary of State George S. Messersmith, and his staff wrestling with the prodigious task of processing thousands of applications for exit

visas of desperate Jews and others who saw the United States as their only likely refuge. The crowds who jammed the two or three blocks surrounding the embassy were so huge that at times they actually forced my taxi to come to a full stop.

A search at the embassy for my relatives' applications proved fruitless. They were lost in a jumble of card forms. Finally I made out new applications for them and signed as their guarantor, indicating that I would accept responsibility for their financial status in the States so that they would not become public charges. As we searched through the boxes of 4-by-6 inch index cards, each representing a desperate bid for safety, the sea of twisted, tortured faces I could see through the window struck me with the cruel incongruity of so many lives depending on mere slips of paper.

Sadly I made my way to my hotel where I found another crowd of people. They were waiting for me. Word had spread through the city that a young American Jew with authority from the President of the United States had arrived with the power to rescue Vienna's Jews.

I was flabbergasted. Looking out of the hotel on the long queue that was winding around the corner, it seemed incomprehensible that my mere presence in Vienna should be the sudden cause of this gathering crowd. Suddenly I found myself inevitably cast in a strange, helpless role.

The least I could do was not to turn them away, but to offer them the knowledge that they were not forgotten. What I was going to accomplish I did not know, but I arranged for a table and some chairs in a vacant room in my hotel and set about interviewing those who had come armed with applications. As they filed through the halls to my room and came to my improvised desk, my depression grew. My

attempted kindness might cause even greater pain. How could I offer them help—or even hope?

Finally a woman came before me clutching a ten-year-old boy close to her. She seized my arm and refused to leave. All I had to do, she said, was to sign for the boy. My signature would give him a chance to live. She would remain and face whatever was to come. I was shattered.

I knew that I had gone far beyond the limit of my assets in having guaranteed the security of my wife's six relatives. It would be foolhardy, possibly irresponsible, to follow that tack any further. I composed a cable to go to wealthy friends in New York asking for their signatures on blank forms for as many refugees as possible. But I quickly realized that this would be futile. By the time the signatures would arrive —regular transoceanic airmail was still in the future—it would probably be too late for most of these harried people.

I was stumped. To gain time, I pleaded hunger. It was past three o'clock and I had missed my lunch. But I asked the people to wait for me as I headed for the hotel grill. I ordered the specialty of the house, boiled beef with horseradish sauce which they served with *"saure Gurken,"* sour pickles. And, as refreshment, I asked the waiter to bring me a tall glass of Pilsner draft beer. This meal made history, especially the beer.

The first two glasses of Pilsner were refreshing enough and they did serve to relax my tightly strung nerves. The third and fourth glasses provided nourishment for the germ of a reckless idea. By the time I finished gulping the sixth I was ready and resolved right there in the grill room that I would sign every blasted form until my right hand cramped.

I rushed up the stairs to preclude the possibility of second thoughts or the effects of the Pilsner wearing off. In the next

hour I did nothing but sign affidavits. Names didn't mean anything any more, nor did numbers. I just scribbled my signature as fast as the forms came up. I can only estimate that I had undertaken financial responsibility, at $25,000 a person, for at least two hundred Viennese Jews. How ironic that so many lives could be saved by the proper application of copious draughts of good Pilsner beer!

The next morning I could view these matters more clearly. I dared not even attempt to total up my potential financial involvement. But even if I could, I wouldn't have rescinded one affidavit. Here was the application of the policy which was to grow in scope and effectiveness as larger rescue movements later came into being. It was expressed in my slogan accepted by Fiorello La Guardia, Herbert Lehman and many others who became deeply involved in these life-saving efforts: "We save them first and argue after."

As an epilogue to this reckless adventure I can report, with pride and a huge sense of relief, that, with the exception of my wife's relatives, none of the hundreds I signed for on that hectic day in Vienna ever called on me for a penny's worth of support.

In the years that have followed, I have often been visited by individuals and groups of these refugees. Fearing the worst, I always expected to hear that they were in financial difficulties and that I would be expected to take up the slack. But it never happened. They were all doing well and their calls were merely to thank me for my help.

One man, a composer Karl Weigl, honored me by dedicating a string quartet to me. It received a happy performance at a reunion in my home. Mrs. Weigl has never failed to send me a small token each year on the anniversary of their arrival in the United States.

A number of the Viennese refugees were skilled in making hand-sewn suede gloves, a craft which had not been developed in this country. When Mrs. Franklin D. Roosevelt undertook to start new industries in economically blighted areas, I was able to bring together a group of these glove designers in Hightstown, New Jersey, where they developed the first high-style glove industry in the United States.

My visit to Vienna was cut short by a cable from Nice where Hortense had gone to prepare for her concerts of the following season. She had been stricken with a dangerous infection and I rushed to join her.

Once her infection was reduced and she was able to resume her work at the piano, I made plans to return to New York. En route, however, I stopped in Paris for a day where, at a cocktail party, I met Louis Kirstein, head of Filene's, the famous Boston department store. Usually, and quite aptly, described as a merchant prince, Kirstein was all of that, a brilliant retailer and a fine, genial gentleman.

At the party he mentioned his disappointment with the lack of progress at Bloomingdale's, a large New York store which had been acquired in 1929 by the Federated Department Store chain of which he was a principal stockholder. It had not lived up to its expectations. Quite casually I expressed the thought that the store's focus should switch from Third Avenue with its elevated lines to Park Avenue, just a short block from the Lexington Avenue side of the store. Kirstein's reaction was to ask me to meet him in New York to continue our discussion. Two months later I moved from Saks Fifth Avenue to Bloomingdale's where I became vice-president.

This was to be the biggest challenge of my merchandising career. Heretofore, I had helped successful businesses expand into broader fields and bolder tempos. At Blooming-

dale's my assignment was to chart a completely new course—to help change the character of the store. The goal was to attract the custom of a more affluent segment of New York's population—people who had never before entered the store.

We needed a new image, and in this quest I labored over the advertising policies and style. I struggled with the long name and tried to design a simple, readable signature that could be quickly recognized, but not associated with the old Bloomingdale's. One day while experimenting with types, I doodled a large graceful "B" which seemed to jump off the paper in three dimensions. I knew I had it, and the cursive capital "B" has become the store's unique trademark. The second letter of the alphabet became a capital asset for one of New York's big stores.

Having thus hoisted our colors, we set about gradually raising the level of the store's merchandise and prices. It didn't take too long before customers from the better neighborhoods in the upper East Side of Manhattan began to infiltrate the ranks of the older, more price-conscious customers. In some departments there was a complete turnover in clientele.

We discovered early in the game that in the field of fashion the lead of the specialty shops on near-by Fifth Avenue would be difficult, very likely impossible, to overcome. We aimed our heavier weapons in other directions. The opening for a new noncompetitive market was in the furniture field. I undertook a concentrated effort to achieve leadership in it.

To me, new furniture customers meant younger people, and it was fairly obvious that the new trend would be in modern design. Imports from Scandinavia and the work of American pioneers in the field were gaining more and more

attention. But there was too little available, especially in functional designs at a reasonable price level.

To assume leadership in the field, I planned a bold stroke that would establish our position and identify us with modern design. The Museum of Modern Art on Fifty-third Street off Fifth Avenue was the center where avant-garde curators had won world-wide prestige for their sponsorship of modern art and design. I made overtures to Nelson Rockefeller and John Hay Whitney, president and chairman of the Museum Board which was made up of enthusiasts who viewed their efforts as a holy mission. My proposition was made to them in keeping with that spirit.

Bloomingdale's was interested in developing modern design in furniture, I told them. We recognized, as the Museum did, that novelty was not enough. Good design meant functionalism. Therefore, we were ready to join the Museum in sponsoring a competition among designers throughout the world. A jury of the leading international experts would decide on the winners. Bloomingdale's would finance the contest and, in addition, would make a contribution to help defray the Museum's deficit.

Nelson Rockefeller was quick to see the merit of entering into a joint enterprise with a merchandise organization to prove that the Museum's resources and reputation could make a practical contribution to the molding of American taste. He personally worked with me, maintained an active interest in the competition through every stage and instructed the new director of the Museum, René d'Harnoncourt, to co-operate fully with me. The Museum was wedded to the idea that this was not to be merely a sterile art competition. The end results would be to arrange for manufacturers to make award-winning furniture for Bloom-

ingdale's and the other stores across the nation which would follow. The producers would have a ready market for a new type of merchandise.

By its very nature, this was healthy collaboration. The result was "Organic Furniture," a new school of furniture design which included among the contest's winners the late Eero Saarinen, whose architectural design of the music shed at the Berkshire Music Festival in Massachusetts and later, the Trans World Flight Center at Idlewild airport, earned him world-wide repute. A joint exhibition of the winning designs was held simultaneously at the Museum of Modern Art and at Bloomingdale's. Art critics, designers, manufacturers and merchants flocked to both exhibits, rubbing shoulders with huge crowds of the curious attracted by reams of publicity given us by an enthusiastic press. Living, modern design had arrived, and Bloomingdale's was established in the vanguard.

In the spring of 1942 I was summoned to Washington on a mission which seemed foreign to my experience, but enabled me to prove once again that affirmative action can provide answers where ordinary methods have failed. George G. Kirstein, son of Louis Kirstein of Federated Stores, had been appointed Executive Secretary of the War Labor Board, and it was he who brought me into a situation that was hamstringing the war effort and which had baffled some of the finest brains in labor relations—the industrial battle in Little Steel.

By the beginning of that year, the War Labor Board appointed by President Roosevelt, which included some of the nation's outstanding figures, had been able to establish a *modus operandi* by which labor and industry could settle

their differences and thus maintain badly needed production of war matériel at full capacity. There was one block in this situation, however—Little Steel. These were steel manufacturers, by no means small, but on a level only slightly lower than Big Steel, the titans such as U.S. Steel. While industrial peace had been won with the bigger companies, the smaller concerns refused to fall into line and the giant United Steelworkers of America was equally adamant about surrendering any of its prerogatives. In the meanwhile, this deadlock was having a devastating effect on our production picture; the loss in war supplies was the equivalent of many heavy bomber raids.

The Board was stymied. This was one of the most fascinating and independent quartets of top-flight Americans I have ever encountered. The President with typical astuteness had balanced the talents and temperaments of each of them against the others. Its chairman was William H. Davis, whose analytical ability and grasp of public issues had enhanced his national stature as a labor mediator. He was a man of stonewall courage under fire; the President said of him, "Davis doesn't scare."

The youngest member of the Board was Wayne Morse, the brilliant Oregonian and former Dean of the Law School of the University of Oregon. With his blazing eyes and fiery eloquence, Morse was a strong contrast to the sedate, academic Professor George Taylor of the Economics Department at the University of Pennsylvania. The Board's pathfinder in the jungle of charts and statistics, Taylor was a steadying influence on the more volatile members of the group.

The anchor man was Dr. Frank H. Graham whom FDR had drafted from the presidency of the University of North Carolina. A broad-shouldered West Pointer, Graham was

tough-minded, pugnacious and fearless, yet deeply concerned with human welfare. It was no secret to all of us that he had a direct wire into President Roosevelt's office and that he did not hesitate to use it.

Kirstein convinced them that their problem included public relations and that a fresh approach by someone on the outside might produce new light which could reveal a way to break the impasse. He also felt that an effort should be made to analyze the situation in terms that would be understood by the public, which was becoming restless in the face of the intransigence of both parties and the ineffectiveness of government intervention.

By the time I arrived in the capital for my first meeting with the Board, they were punch drunk. Fatigue and frustration were evident in their irritable and negative reactions.

"You will never come up with anything in this state of exhaustion," I said, not without sympathy. "Why don't you take some time out while I study the record of what has already transpired?"

They gave me one full day.

I retired to my hotel room with what seemed like bales of paper, black with typewriting. These were all the proposed solutions that had been discussed and rejected. It was one of those situations where the problem was clear but the solution seemingly unattainable. The Board was trying to work out a date for retroactive pay which would satisfy all the requirements of a complicated wage scale. But, no matter what date was tried, or what variation of the scale was suggested, they were unable to reach a suitable balance.

Not being an expert and having no columns adding up to exactly correct sums, I proposed a simple solution. I selected one arrangement which had been proposed by Dr. Taylor

and which came closest to a balance. I proposed this as the best possible formula to be sold to the warring parties and the public. As strongly as I could, I urged the Board to boil down their complicated formula into easily understood, non-legal language and recommend this to the President through Isador Lubin, his Economic Assistant. The President, in turn, could urge acceptance by Philip Murray, head of the C.I.O. The Little Steel companies, I was certain, would be forced to abide by such a decision, especially in the face of the combined pressures of government and public opinion. I even offered to write a précis of their opinion. All the facts, I felt, could be extracted from the original hundred pages and compressed to approximately six.

Dr. Taylor insisted that the figures would not work out and that the Board would be accused of bad arithmetic, if not subterfuge. But the Board, in sheer desperation, reluctantly decided to go along with my recommendation. I believe that I convinced them that everyone, including the combatants, was so tired of the fight and so eager to get back into harness that no one would bother to check the arithmetic too closely.

The next morning the opinion, in the six pages I had promised, was sent down to Dr. Lubin, who promptly accepted it and arranged a luncheon meeting for the President and Philip Murray for the same day. It was scheduled for noon.

At eleven, however, a dark cloud appeared. Davis came into my office bearing a copy of the opinion. Steve Early, the President's secretary, had phoned to say that it had to be boiled down further. One page was all the President would read.

I held my head in despair. How could I do it? I asked

Davis. I thought I had already performed a feat of editing. How could I possibly condense this highly complicated formula into one page of copy?

Davis' answer was succinct. "It's all yours, boy," he said, and left me to my task.

Somehow, I did reduce the verbiage, quite a bit, in fact. But at two and a half pages I reached my limit. Not one more word could come out without making the whole thing unintelligible.

The luncheon was but minutes away when the solution, childlike in its simplicity, came to me. Calmly, I took my copy to a stenographer and instructed her to retype it, double-spaced instead of triple-spaced, and on one long sheet of paper. Once this was done I handed it, without comment and without facial expression, to Mr. Davis, who with equal blandness merely folded it, enclosed it in an envelope and had it rushed by messenger to the White House. Less than an hour later, the only word we were to receive from that source came back: "Murray agreed."

The next day I sat next to Davis while he announced to a jammed press conference that a decision had been reached and that any opposition in this time of crisis by either labor or management could only be interpreted as "treason" in time of war. He outlined the plan, and copies of my précis were circulated among the correspondents, who rushed to their phones and teletype machines to announce the birth of "The Little Steel Formula." Labor history had been made —and no one checked the arithmetic.

Back in New York, I returned to my pet project—television. As far back as 1929, while I was still at Bambergers, I was convinced that TV was just around the corner. Engineers

working with me at that time had managed to send a visual signal from studios in Newark to Hackensack, New Jersey, a distance of about fifteen miles. Not exactly around the corner, but only ten years later, in 1939, the Radio Corporation of America demonstrated the transmission of clear pictures to the public at their exhibit at the New York World's Fair. It was about this time that I met David Sarnoff, RCA president, at the home of Samuel Chotzinoff, the music critic, who along with others urged Sarnoff to bring Toscanini back to the United States to head up a newly proposed National Broadcasting Company Symphony Orchestra. That evening Sarnoff launched into a fascinating depiction of the future of television and predicted that the picture would soon take the place of the radio set in the living rooms of American homes. I needed little urging to get involved in it.

The limitless possibilities of TV became an obsession with me, and I hammered away at the directors of the Federated Stores until they authorized me to apply to the Federal Communications Commission for TV licenses for all five of our stores in cities across the country.

A new corporation was organized, the Metropolitan Television Company, with Walter N. Rothschild, head of Abraham and Straus, the Brooklyn department store, as its president. I was named executive vice-president and general manager. We were granted an experimental television license for New York and we built our first test station atop the Hotel Pierre at Fifth Avenue and Sixtieth Street, a site I had selected looking out the window of my office at Bloomingdale's. Later, engineers complimented me on having made one of the best technical guesses of the day.

But we ran into a snag in our application for a commercial license to broadcast in New York. All seven channels,

the limit of the TV spectrum, had been assigned. Andrew G. Haley, our attorney in Washington, D.C., insisted that with expert engineering assistance he could prove that there was room on the spectrum for another channel. And typical of Haley, erstwhile president of the American Rocket Society, who is convinced he will some day travel to the moon, he furnished the proof and W2XMT, an experimental TV station was granted us.

At a meeting with Haley he casually brought up the name of Major Edwin H. Armstrong and the work he was doing in a new field called frequency modulation. Haley told me that Armstrong, a pioneer in broadcasting and then a teacher at Columbia University, was experimenting with a new type of radio transmission which would eliminate all the distortion and interference that hampered the enjoyment of broadcast music. This hit me on my most sensitive spot, and I was soon off to visit Armstrong in his basement workroom at Columbia.

Even his experimental equipment left no doubt of its radical improvement over AM. When I heard the clear, unmuffled music, freed from the technical imperfections which had previously distorted it, I was entranced and convinced that this was the communications medium of the future. I was in love with FM.

I quickly applied for and received the first FM license in New York City. We built our FM station at the Hotel Pierre in the same studios that housed our infant TV station. Our original designation was W75NY, but I dubbed it "The Information Station" and alternated great music programs with information about important events and background news.

Some years later, after World War II was won and we could return to business as usual, with the generous financial

assistance of Harry Scherman, the astute creator of the Book-of-the-Month Club, I bought the FM Station and W2XMT from Bloomingdale's and Abraham and Straus. This was my maiden effort as an independent businessman. The station was redesignated WABF, and we dedicated it to high ideals and resigned ourselves to substantial losses.

Oddly enough, this FM radio station was to be the scene of a reprise of my earlier adventure in Vienna. I was visited by a group of well-meaning but overenthusiastic people who were petitioning me to be a candidate for the mayoralty of New York. I hid my horror at their suggestion and thanked them for their confidence in me, but politely and firmly told them that I was not interested in running for office.

Even while the spokesman was presenting their case, reading a resolution to which, as I could see, a list of names had been signed, I couldn't help but notice a young man in the front row staring at me. It was an uncomfortable sensation, and I was distracted by my guesses as to his purpose. That he would have something to say to me I was sure.

So, when the others trooped out, I wasn't surprised when he hung back and asked to see me alone. This gambit I recognized: he was probably looking for a job. I began to prepare myself for the polite rejection which every busy executive is forced to make almost every day.

Once the door was closed, he simply looked up at me and almost plaintively said: "I just want to thank you for saving my life."

I tried to interrupt, but he continued: "I don't think you will remember me, but I was just a little boy when my mother refused to leave your hotel room until you signed an affidavit for me. It was in Vienna."

His simple words took me back ten years in an instant. I

had forgotten, but now I would always remember him. I was afraid to ask after his valiant mother, and I didn't think it necessary to tell him that it was her insistence that really started me on the track of a decision which had saved some two hundred lives. But when he said in his quiet voice, "Now I am here, free and self-supporting," I managed to recover sufficiently from my emotional shock to say, "I know that you will give something back to the country that gave you your freedom."

Chapter VIII

When Fiorello La Guardia was elected to his first term as mayor of New York City after a vigorous campaign in which I won my spurs in municipal affairs, he offered me my choice of two important political appointments in his administration. As I have noted previously, I thought it wiser to stick to my retailing even after La Guardia broadened his offer to include "any job he wants in my administration," in a statement made and reported by several newspapermen.

In the course of his first two terms in office, the Mayor called on me for many trouble-shooting assignments, but they never entailed any permanent commitment. However, my activity on the boards of the University in Exile and the New School, as well as several years on the faculty of New York University, had whetted my interest in that stepchild of city administration, education. I readily accepted a post he offered me on the Board of Higher Education, the governing body for the city's four free colleges.

As trustee, a nonpaying position, I was given an opportunity to make a contribution to the sorely needed overhaul of the administration of the municipal colleges. Even after

two terms of good government under La Guardia, these institutions still suffered from years of neglect under the old Tammany Hall mismanagement. At City College, the oldest and largest of the schools, faculty members and students were rebelling against weak direction and archaic curricula. There had actually been riots on the campus.

Serving on a committee with Dean Harry J. Carman of Columbia University, Ruth Shoup and Lauson Stone, son of the Chief Justice of the United States, I became involved in the uphill fight to reform the schools' curricula and outdated methods. The first step, of course, was to purge the faculties of deadwood. Many of the men and women slated to go owed their positions to political influence. Dislodging them was a slow and difficult process. But we were making marked progress when a crisis arose which was to jolt my personal life as well as my career as a public official.

At the core of my difficulties was Bertrand Russell, then as ever a brilliantly individualistic and contentious personality. Russell's many controversial opinions, notably on such matters as companionate marriage, as well as his own multiple marriages, had aroused vehement opposition to his appointment as a special visiting lecturer at Hunter College. What had been considered a coup for the city's higher educational system had become a source of embarrassment to the Mayor when many church groups and other organizations made a strong attempt to block Russell's lectures.

Immediately after Russell had announced his acceptance of the school's invitation, the Board was besieged by protests.

Although he was under similar pressure, La Guardia had never attempted to influence my vote on this or any other issue. That is why I was caught off balance when the Mayor

called me late one afternoon just as I was leaving my office at Bloomingdale's to attend a meeting of the Board of Higher Education.

"Going to tonight's meeting?" he asked.

I told him I was on my way when he called. In reply to further questioning, I assured him that I was aware that the final vote on the Russell appointment was on the evening's agenda.

"You know how I feel about this," La Guardia added. "Tead is here with me now and you know we are opposed to it."

After brief hesitation all I could say was, "I know."

The meeting lived up to my worst expectations. Having quickly brushed aside routine matters, Ordway Tead, Chairman of the Board, opened the floor for a discussion of the Russell appointment. The acrimonious debate that followed lasted well past midnight when a vote was finally called for.

As the latest appointee to the Board, my turn came last. Keeping count of the yeas and nays, I knew the vote was going to be close, but I had not expected to find myself in the unenviable position of facing a tie. Mine was to be the deciding vote.

I had never discussed this matter with my fellow Board members. Since I was a close friend of the Mayor, Russell's backers assumed that I was going to vote against them. In fact, I knew that many of the trustees had long suspected that I was La Guardia's "eyes and ears" on the Board—a role actually played by Reuben Lazarus, a young legal adviser in his office.

Before my turn to vote came up I had written out a statement on the reason for my decision. I did not save a copy of what I read to the Board, but my action created such

tumult for me that even now I can remember almost every word. This is a reasonably close recollection:

"The issue here is not Bertrand Russell, but academic freedom. Too little respect for this hallmark of our democratic process, so hard won, has been manifested in recent times in our country. It is being flouted in Germany. My convictions on this subject are strong and unequivocal. I vote 'Yes.'"

The meeting broke up. Reporters who had been barred from the proceedings quickly got the word and rushed to their telephones to pass it along to their city rooms. The Board's affirmation of the Russell appointment was first-page news in every morning paper.

No one knew La Guardia's fiery temper better than I. When my telephone rang early the next morning, I knew it would be he. Fiorello was livid. He insisted that I had broken a promise to him although I had been so careful not to commit myself. I tried to explain my position, but it was impossible. In a final burst of vituperation, he demanded that I come down to City Hall to submit my resignation. I was still trying to get in a word of explanation when I heard the unmistakable sound of his receiver being slammed down.

I did the only thing possible. All the arguments I had not been able to make were listed in a friendly but firm letter to the Mayor. Not only did I explain the reason for my vote, but I insisted that he must respect my independence even when we disagreed. I closed by categorically refusing to resign.

With all my knowledge of the man, however, I was not prepared for his next move. It came the next day in the form of a call from Reuben Lazarus, who informed me that I was to appear at the office of the Commissioner of Investi-

gation to answer questions about my political background and alleged affiliations with left-wing organizations.

My position seemed hopeless. The City Charter gave the Mayor the right to remove Board members. The only reservation was that charges had to be made and answered. Whatever the formalities, La Guardia would be my judge.

It wasn't until some time later that I understood the intensity of his feelings. His vengeful mood was based not so much on his personal opposition to Bertrand Russell or Russell's ideas. I was told that he was incensed by his inability to fulfill a promise he had made to kill the appointment. In addition, and perhaps of greater significance, Fiorello was deeply wounded by what he considered betrayal by a close friend.

So, because of this imagined act of disloyalty, our warm friendship was disrupted. I deeply missed the friendship, but did not regret my decision.

In past fracases when I seemed to be on the verge of a personal disaster there had always been someone who had come on the scene to save the day. Now I needed such a friend. I sought the advice of my attorney, Morris L. Ernst, who suggested that I speak to Charles Burlingham, to my mind the first citizen of New York.

Burlingham, Judge Samuel Seabury and Tom Thatcher were the Big Three in the city's reform movement. It was this trio that had selected La Guardia to head the Fusion ticket as its candidate for the mayoralty. It was often said that La Guardia listened only to God and Burlingham and there was some question about the former.

I told Burlingham the full story at his apartment the next day—how I had voted and why. He listened to my recital with a half-quizzical smile on his patrician face. When I had

finished, he reassured me. "Young man, don't worry, I'll defend you against the Mayor and, if necessary, get Seabury and Thatcher to join me."

Our interview thus happily concluded, he walked me to the elevator and, as a parting shot, said, "Remember, Fiorello is a Corsican and Lazarus is a lackey."

My inquisition was called off, but Fiorello refused to talk to me for more than a year. As for Bertrand Russell, other methods were found to prevent his sullying the pristine minds of Hunter College students.

La Guardia didn't forgive me too readily. It took the intercession of mutual friends many months later to get me out of the personal coventry he had committed me to. During those months our estrangement caused many moments of embarrassment for both of us. One incident stands out.

The new Hunter College building on Park Avenue and Sixty-eighth Street was to be dedicated. It was an important event in La Guardia's administration and obviously one in which the Board of Higher Education was a participant. President Roosevelt had come up from Washington to be the principal speaker, and a large group of interested citizens as well as newspapermen, broadcasters and newsreelmen were there to record the happy occasion.

Proudly the Mayor escorted Roosevelt into the new building, the President in his wheelchair. All the Board members rose to greet Roosevelt and to shake his hand. At this moment La Guardia saw me there. He shook hands with each Board member, but when he came to me, with a black scowl he turned on his heel and, to the amazement and shock of the onlookers, walked out of the room. Fiorello never did anything halfway.

In the nine years of my term as a trustee of New York's

colleges, we succeeded in most of our objectives. New presidents took over the reins of the schools. The young men and women of the city now studied under revitalized faculties and modern curricula.

I had been designated to represent the Board in matters dealing with the Summer Symphony Concerts at Lewisohn Stadium, the City College athletic field. This was part of a general assignment to handle all matters where music was involved. A plan had been put into effect which provided free seats at the concerts for college students. Strangely, there was little response to the offer. Taking a leaf from my experience as a merchandiser, I prevailed upon Minnie Guggenheimer, the perennial mistress of the Stadium Concerts, to experiment with a new principle: to offer the students tickets at ten cents each. Thousands of them were purchased and the young people thronged to the concerts. This was for many of them an introduction to good music. I had learned long ago that people place little value on anything they get for nothing.

By the time a truce had been declared between Fiorello and me and our renewed friendship had attained its old warmth, our country was at war. After my first success with the War Labor Board, they called on me several times to help in similar deadlocks. In fact, I was kept running more and more between my official job at Bloomingdale's and my varied assignments in Washington.

La Guardia was desperately impatient to get into the war, but he was to suffer a painful disappointment before his services were properly utilized. The President had announced Fiorello's appointment on a special mission to Italy—a choice based on his World War I experience as an

Air Corps hero in Italy as well as his eminence as an American of Italian descent. Somehow this job, which La Guardia wanted very badly, never materialized. In fact, the rescinding of his original orders was widely publicized. Fiorello, who had gone so far as to have uniforms made, was terribly hurt. I shared his disappointment since the two of us had assumed that I would join him in Italy. As could be expected, La Guardia did eventually play an important role in the prosecution of the war as well as in the hectic days that followed the surrender of the Axis powers. But neither of us ever forgot that temporary setback.

Chapter IX

Meanwhile, the reverses Hitler was meeting on his newly opened eastern front stimulated rather than slowed his separate war against the defenseless Jewish people. Even as the authenticity of the seemingly unbelievable stories of wholesale slaughter was being debated, word leaked out of the newly devised murder methods being employed. The death marches, gas chambers and other satanic devices were known to us, as was Hitler's avowed aim to exterminate world Jewry, but efforts to thwart this mad ambition were few and weak. The world was too busy killing to be concerned with the rescue of a minority marked for annihilation.

The stories that filtered back through the lines grew more and more gruesome. There were even occasional smuggled photographs of mass graves with men, women and children standing by their edges, mutely awaiting the bullets of the *Einsatzgruppen* which would hurl them into the pits. Their faces still haunt me.

My pent-up feelings erupted when our newspapers recorded the grim story of the sinking of the *Struma.* A leaky old coastal excursion boat, flying the flag of Panama, the S.S.

Struma was limping through the Black Sea from Constantsa in Rumania toward Palestine when it was forced to put into the Turkish port of Istanbul. Built many years before to carry a hundred passengers, it was loaded with an incredible 767 Rumanian men, women, and children crammed in like cattle by the ship's freebooting Greek owners. And these, all concentration camp survivors, still suffered the effects of systematic torture and starvation.

The captain of the *Struma* acknowledged that his passengers had no legal claim to any destination and that they possessed neither immigration permits nor visas. All they asked was temporary shelter, a haven, until the way could be found for them to enter Palestine, their only hope for survival.

For two months the *Struma* lay anchored in the Istanbul harbor, its already weakened passengers suffering even more in one of the worst winters to hit the area. At one point, the temperature dropped to 8 degrees below zero. Aside from some slight medical assistance and meager rations of food, nothing was done for the hundreds of suffering people jammed into their horribly inadequate quarters. Despite warnings of disaster, the British classified these unfortunates as "illegal" and refused them entry into Palestine. The Turkish government, wary of its favored position as a "neutral" power, would not let them land even temporarily. And nowhere in the free world, not even in the United States, was there a voice of reason or compassion raised to save the people of the *Struma.*

On February 24, 1942, the Turks ordered the *Struma* out of the harbor. Unwilling or unable to put to sea, the doomed vessel was towed five miles out of the harbor and cut loose. A few minutes later, in full view of the horrified spectators

who had come to the waterfront to witness the sailing of the vessel, it broke in half and sank. There are some who say the ship was scuttled in a suicidal protest. Others claim that the *Struma* struck a floating mine. The indisputable truth is that on a tragic day in human history 70 children, 269 women and 428 men found their eternal rest in the bed of the Bosporus.

The tragedy of the *Struma* made an impact on the consciences of people all over the world. For the first time the question of the responsibility for the survivors of Hitlerism was being aired. A rash of editorials deplored the apathy and heartlessness of the governments involved. In open debate on the floor of the House of Commons, a Member of Parliament, D. L. Lipson, pointed out that, "if the *Struma* had been an enemy ship, the German, Italian or Japanese passengers would have been interned."

Anthony Eden announced to that same body that half the followers of the ex-Mufti of Palestine who had been ousted in 1939 because of pro-Axis leanings had been readmitted with the connivance and consent of British officials.

But there was no action taken. And the *Struma* was but the first of many ships to share its fate. I can number at least seven, including the tiny *Salvador,* which was lost off the Turkish coast in the Marmora Sea with 300 passengers, mostly children.

Protests were made in every shape and form, but still no concrete action was taken, governmental or otherwise, that I could see. And the Intergovernmental Committee set up at Evian four years before was living up to its predicted ineffectuality.

It was clear that Hitler's unholy crusade against the Jews

had been permitted to gain in fury with little or no effort at opposition from the outside world. In the face of this carnage, the so-called civilized forces remained passive. The more I thought about it, the more I was convinced that we had become paralyzed in our efforts to halt this slaughter of a helpless minority. I refused to accept Hitler's edict that the Jews were expendable as casualties of hate while the civilized world was distracted by war.

In our concentration and zeal for killing the enemy, we had lost sight of our obligation to try at least to save the innocent. Where was the heart that had beat for the Belgians, the Chinese, the Armenians? Had it stopped where the Jews were the victims—or was it just broken?

Restlessly I searched for advice on the best place to establish a base for the rescue of refugees. Then, in the summer of 1943, someone took me to a meeting of a group called the Emergency Committee to Save the Jewish People of Europe. There I met Mrs. John Gunther and Peter Bergson, who gave me advice on where I could be most effective. The son of the famous religious leader and seminarist, Rabbi Kook of Palestine, Bergson, a resourceful organizer well versed in the ways of the Middle East, told me that Turkey, a neutral country in the confluence of the waterways and rail systems leading toward Palestine, would be the ideal base for rescue operations. In fact, he informed me that members of their group wanted to travel there to set up rescue machinery. However, they had been blocked by the State Department as well as military authorities who would not permit civilians to travel in wartime.

My eyes fixed on Turkey, I resolved to try my hand with the State Department.

A week later in Washington I was admitted to the office

of Breckinridge Long, Assistant Secretary of State in charge of refugee affairs. With all the persuasion I could muster, I pleaded the case of the "stateless people" and suggested that Turkey should be an exit to freedom for many refugees trapped in the Balkans. Long listened politely and attentively as I said it must be "within the resources of civilized men to check this human carnage."

Not illogically, however, he asked: "What can you do there alone, as a private citizen?"

I pounced on his query as an indication of interest. "I want to see with my own eyes what is being done and whether we can't do more," I replied, adding, "Sometimes a non-professional in a new situation may be able to pry open a window or a door which others have found hopelessly barred."

Long finally agreed to cable Laurence A. Steinhardt, United States Ambassador to Turkey. I was encouraged for the first time when Steinhardt, whom I had met earlier at the home of Judge Julian Mack, cabled Long that he saw no objection to my coming to Turkey to make an investigation.

Meanwhile, swift-moving developments in Washington took the decision out of Long's hands. President Roosevelt signed an Emergency Order which created the War Refugee Board. Comprised of the Secretaries of State, Treasury and War—Hull, Morgenthau and Stimson—the Board was given authority to act with top priority "to take immediate action in rescue." Secretary Morgenthau was the architect of the order establishing the Board which had the firm support of Harry Hopkins, Roosevelt's confidant. Specifically, it called for the immediate appointment of people to represent the Board in the field. These representatives, armed with diplo-

matic status and financial resources, were to operate in foreign posts as close as possible to the scene of action.

While I was in Washington being briefed for my trip, Oscar Cox, one of Hopkins' closest aides and the author of the historic Lend Lease formula, phoned and told me that I had been chosen as the Board's first special envoy, to carry out the Board's policies in Turkey and the Middle East. "To see that you do not work in a vacuum out there," he said, "we are going to put teeth into your efforts."

I was extremely pleased when I met John H. Pehle, Jr., Director of the War Refugee Board. A handsome, intelligent man of about thirty-six years, he was a key figure in a collection of young, resourceful aides with whom the Secretary of the Treasury had surrounded himself. He was a brilliant choice for one of the toughest wartime assignments—to create machinery overnight to reach into enemy countries to rescue victims of racism and persecution.

Pehle knew, almost instinctively, that this was an extraordinary assignment with no precedent as a guide. His orders were to get the job done no matter how, and he was ready to countenance any means, even those as unorthodox as mine. At our first meeting he promised me unqualified support and he never wavered.

In preparation for my mission I made the Washington rounds. In quest of advice and suggestions as well as support, I met with Henry Morgenthau, Jr. and Felix Frankfurter. My visiting list also included such White House stalwarts as Benjamin Cohen, Harry Hopkins and Isador Lubin. They all promised me their support and wished me luck on my mission.

Lubin went further. Discreetly he warned me that I might run into resistance from the British. "They run things in the

Middle East," he pointed out, "and hold the keys to the success or failure of your work—visas for the refugees."

He wrote one word on a small piece of paper and said: "If you get into a jam, cable this word to me at the White House. Perhaps I will be able to get the boss to help."

It proved to be a magic word which in the months to come cleared up snarls and opened doors that had been shut against me and the refugees en route to Turkey.

Chapter X

Before leaving for Turkey I met in New York at the home of Judge Joseph J. Proskauer, with a small representative group of national leaders of the American Jewish community. I assured these men that my mission was primarily concerned with the rescue of refugees, most of whom were Jewish, but that my first duty was as a representative of the United States. Their organizational interests would be served only when they coincided with the aims of our government. They clearly understood my position and offered me their collective strength and wealth if I found it necessary or expedient to call on them. Not too much time would pass before I was to make use of their offer.

Further study and research supported the judgment which had first turned me in the direction of Turkey. This had to be the escape hatch for Rumanian and Bulgarian refugees as well as for the thousands who sifted down from the north through Hungary.

Because of Turkey's legal status as a "neutral," we could work there close to, even in sight of, enemy lands. The lifeline of refugee movement was the waterways—the Sea of

Marmora, the Bosporus and the Dardanelles—all controlled by Turkey. These connected the Black Sea and the Mediterranean, the exits to the south and east. In addition, all overland routes from Bulgaria passed through Turkey and all rail lines in that part of the world converged in Istanbul. Turkey was a bottleneck which had to be broken if the desperate people on the wrong shore of the Black Sea were not to perish within sight of freedom.

Only after I received my travel authorization from the War Department did I make my formal request for a six-weeks' leave of absence from my superiors at Bloomingdale's. My great friend, Louis Kirstein, had died and Walter Rothschild, president of Abraham and Straus, was doubling in brass as supervisor of operations at Bloomingdale's for the Federated Department Stores.

Although he was sensitive to the larger issues, Mr. Rothschild demurred, noting the manpower shortage and the need for my services. The fact was my decision had already been made, my plans were in motion and I was merely going through a formality, dictated by courtesy. Finally, I told him, "... I am going, whatever the consequences."

They weren't too happy about this, but I must say, to the credit of Mr. Rothschild and Federated, in the three months to which my original six weeks extended they kept me on the payroll although they gained nothing from me at the time.

So, in the darkness of a predawn January morning, I sat huddled and shivering with my fellow passengers in an Army Air Transport plane in the blacked-out Washington airport waiting for our take-off. The other bucket seats were occupied by youthful Air Force personnel on their way to India where they were slated to fly the Hump. At 3 A.M. we were airborne.

We flew the southern route. With stops at Natal in Brazil, Ascension Island in the Atlantic, Accra on the Gold Coast of Africa and others in the jungles, it took a week before we touched down at Cairo. There I found the first of what would be a long series of maddening irritations; the Turks had not yet got around to issuing my entrance visa.

I took advantage of this delay to make my first visit to Palestine with transportation furnished by the Royal Air Force.

Bearing a letter from my friend, Arthur Sulzberger, publisher of *The New York Times,* I went at once to see Rabbi Judah Magnes. The founder and first president of Hebrew University, the former spiritual leader of San Francisco Jewry, Rabbi Magnes was a true idealist who had found full serenity in the implementation of his ideals. As a boy in Baltimore, I had heard Dr. Magnes in the pulpit as a distinguished guest rabbi in the synagogue where I sang in the choir. He was a handsome man of commanding eloquence, and his personality made a lasting impression on me. He and his wife, the daughter of the great jurist, Louis Marshall, sincere in their zeal as Zionists, had pulled up stakes and moved permanently to Palestine.

It was late afternoon when we met at the university, then on Mount Scopus, now deep in no-man's-land outside of Jerusalem. At twilight Magnes led me to the roof to share a daily rite, to watch the sun go down over the Judean hills. Never given to religious or mystical reactions, I was filled with wonderment by the panorama from our pinnacle, looking across the Judean hills to the striking blue of the Mediterranean and past rugged heights and steep crevices to the Jordan and still farther to the Dead Sea. As deepening shades of purple formed a curtain across the waning day, I felt

suspended in time and space. Often, in my many trips to Jerusalem, I have relived this transcendence, a visit to a timeless past.

Dr. Magnes set up appointments for me with the leaders of the Jewish Agency, the quasi-governmental body charged by the British mandatory power in Palestine to represent the interests of their Jewish residents. They included David Ben-Gurion, Moshe Shertok (now Sharett), Eliezar Kaplan and Henrietta Szold, founder of Hadassah.

Miss Szold was in failing health when I visited her at the Hadassah Hospital, but nothing could detract from the vision and dynamism which animated her frail person. A former schoolteacher whose family I had known in Baltimore, Miss Szold had initiated, inspired and developed the movement which has rallied the dedicated support of thousands of women in the United States. As I listened to her moving description of the program for healing the sick and fostering the young in Israel and her bold plans for enlisting the aid of every Jewish woman in America, I recalled the words of Justice Brandeis who had called Hadassah the best-run organization in the country.

The Jewish leaders in Palestine recognized me as the first United States representative in the area with the funds and authorization to effectuate rescue operations from enemy territory. They called on their experience to brief me on the problems and pitfalls awaiting me in Turkey.

I spent a fascinating evening in the modest Tel Aviv home of David Ben-Gurion, then chairman of the Jewish Agency. His living room, lined with books in a wide variety of modern and classic languages, testified to the scholarship that enriched his prophetic character. We were only four years from the establishment of the State of Israel, but his forecast of its

concomitant problems seemed to me then to be fanciful, even if eloquent and sincere. Today, however, his predictions of the war with the Arabs, the mass immigration from Europe and North Africa and the conquest of desert sand and stone, appear as nothing short of prescience.

Ben-Gurion repeatedly stressed Palestine's great need for new blood. "Do you know what made America?" he asked me. And before I could react to his rhetorical question, he answered in a sharp staccato, "People."

To BG all immigrants are valuable. He told me of two thousand Jews only recently come to Palestine from Yemen. Illiterate, completely untrained, nevertheless there was a competition for their services. But he had his eye on Europe as well and was obviously attuned to the problems of the area I was going to.

The peppery Zionist leader was my first teacher on the role of the British in the Middle East. He outlined succinctly exactly why the Mandatory Power was blocking the emigration of European Jews to Palestine. Typically, he didn't mince words.

"The English are different here from the English in London. Their colonial officials are mediocre cops accustomed to ruling native people."

The European Jewish settlers, he pointed out, were not unlettered, untrained people striving to scratch out a bare existence from the stubborn soil. They were educated, highly trained agriculturists and entrepreneurs who gained essential strength from a philosophy with which all of them were imbued. Their basic drive, he told me, was not merely to exist, but to build.

"Ours is a maritime people," he emphasized. "Our ships will sail all the seas. Our enemy is not the Arab people but

the soil which we will win and nurture. We need youth, work and faith in the prophets that guide us."

Pacing up and down the room, Ben-Gurion spoke of the distant past as if it were yesterday and the future as if it were with us. There was no room for any doubts in his powerful conviction, a thought he expressed with simple clarity as our interview came to an end. "We will *do* it."

I have come to know Ben-Gurion much better and more intimately in the course of my many subsequent trips to the Middle East. His stature as a statesman has grown with each successive step forward of the State of Israel. His place in history is assured, but he never impressed me more than during that first meeting in Palestine of the war years when he vowed "We will do it."

A full month after my departure from Washington, on February 4, 1944, I stepped off a train in Ankara to be met by Ambassador Steinhardt and Joseph M. Levy of *The New York Times*. I had been on the train for twenty-eight hours.

Levy had received a cable from Sulzberger asking him to help me. He turned out to be a right arm. A native of Palestine who could speak both Arabic and Turkish fluently, he had connections among Turkish politicians and police that were to prove indispensable.

Prepared to use my new striped trousers on my arrival, I was amazed on my first night in Turkey to find myself deeply involved in a new kind of merchandising: my goods were human beings. Eager for a bath and sleep, I was in my room just a few minutes when a knock on my door announced the presence of two young Palestinian Jews. Despite my protests that I hadn't slept in two days and was suffering from a heavy cold, one of them in a low tense voice said: "Quick,

come with us, we can save some Jewish children but we must act immediately."

When I hesitated, the other of "the Boys," as I came to know these irregular troops, pulled out a bottle of brandy which he urged on me as medicine. Powerful and raw, it did pick me up, and I followed my new friends to the basement of a house a few blocks from the hotel.

It was a scene taken directly from cloak and dagger literature. And some of the players, obviously Turks, looked like characters from the pirate stories of my childhood. In a language I couldn't understand, the Boys immediately entered into an animated conversation with "the pirates." I could only guess that they were haggling over something, an exercise which became even more heated when we were joined by three more Palestinians.

Suddenly the leader, a young redhead named Schind, turned to me and said: "It's agreed, three hundred dollars a head, is that all right with you?"

For a moment I simply stared and shuddered. I realized that they meant the Jewish children he had referred to at my hotel. It was still a bit stark for me. In my department store experience I had bought and sold about everything from pins to automobiles, but how do you set a price on a child, any child, let alone a Jewish child marked for death?

"What would the life of my child be worth," I asked myself and quickly said: "We will take all you have."

This was the beginning of nerve-racking months in the traffic of human lives. Over a period of eight months, we "bought" about fifteen thousand men, women and children. The Boys and I agreed to exploit my authority and resources to the full, just so long as my position as an official representative of my government was protected.

But even our expenditures and well-organized underground railway could not guarantee clear passage for all the battered little boats with their overloads of precious cargo. Too many children found their resting place within sight of freedom at the bottom of the Black Sea and the Bosporus.

Our first so-called "illegal" ship to attempt entrance at Istanbul was the S.S. *Milka,* en route from Constantsa with approximately 250 refugees aboard. As with the *Struma* the Turkish Foreign Office refused it permission to dock. This was to be the first crucial test. Not only could we not permit another *Struma* incident, but waiting in Constantsa and Burgas were other ships, the beginning of our "bridge of boats" across the Black Sea. Aboard these ships, chartered by the Boys with funds from the Jewish Agency and voluntary groups in America and other allied countries, were hundreds of refugees who had somehow managed to reach the shores of Rumania and Bulgaria. To permit a halt of their passage now would be to condemn them to death by starvation and exposure.

I impressed these facts on Ambassador Steinhardt and convinced him that this was the core of my mission. Convinced that this was government policy and not some wild scheme of my own, Steinhardt applied every bit of leverage he could to force Numan Menemencioglu, the Turkish Foreign Minister, to make an exception of this one ship. Reluctantly this was done. Menemencioglu insisted, however, that the refugees could not remain in Turkey and must immediately entrain in sealed cars through Asia Minor across Syria to Palestine.

The operation went ahead with amazing efficiency for that part of the world. The *Milka* was allowed to dock temporarily at Haydarpasa, on the Asiatic side of Istanbul, where the

passengers were herded directly into waiting railway cars which had been attached to the semiweekly Istanbul-Aleppo train. I stood on the railway platform with Dr. Joseph Schwartz, of the Joint Distribution Committee, and Joe Levy and watched the tired refugees march wearily toward the trains under the close surveillance of Turkish police. We were not allowed to visit or talk to the refugees, yet there was a communication of emotion that couldn't be blocked. Hysteria and terror were still clearly imprinted on the faces of many of them, especially the children. But all of us, on both sides of the police lines, shared the same feeling deep within us. This was a new pilgrimage—the march of people redeemed to new homes, new hopes and the promise of a bright future.

Our bridgehead was established! The *Milka* was followed by the *Maritza*, the *Ballacitta*, the *Kazbeck* and many others.

Each time a ship came in, the scene was repeated. There were few variations. Because of the restrictions it was difficult to have any contact with the refugees themselves, but occasionally we would violate Turkish security to learn more of the hardships suffered by these people—as well as their aspirations.

I struck up a great friendship with a thirteen-year-old Polish Jewish boy. Motek had been walking for five years, his trek across Europe having begun when he was barely eight. The Nazis had come to his village and among others shot down all of Motek's family. The boy had escaped by hiding in a barrel of water in the cellar. He stood upright in its chill all night with just his head over the surface. Once he felt safe, he struck out away from the village. He didn't know where he was heading, but he knew he couldn't stay.

Motek's travels led him into almost unbelievable predica-

ments. One time he wandered into a concentration camp and even stayed there for a while, taking strength from human companionship even under those trying circumstances. Since the Nazis in charge had no record of him, he was able to slip out as unobtrusively as he had come in. He kept walking and finally got to the Slovakian border. There the underground helped him into Hungary where he joined a group of children led by a nineteen-year-old girl volunteer from the underground. When I met Motek he still carried a picture of his heroine. She had been shot while herding her charges to safety.

I thought what a good home in America could do for a boy who had gone through so much and still displayed such fortitude. But when I tried to single him out for adoption, I was soon lost in a maze of red tape and official objections. During my futile attempts, Motek left for Palestine with his companions. I have never seen him since our meeting in Istanbul, but I am certain that somewhere in modern Israel, Motek has found a new life and is sharing his great inner strength with others.

It must be understood that all credit for arrangements made behind the enemy lines, the actual rescue, must go to the Boys. Time and again these young men from Palestine, most of them Haganah volunteers who were actually official representatives of the Jewish Agency for Palestine, went off on missions from which they knew many of them would not return. British Intelligence, which controlled the theater of operation, gave them full co-operation because the Boys also brought back useful military information. But their principal mission, the one which gave them the courage to risk their lives, even cheerfully, in unbelievable fashion was to keep alive the remnants of European Jewry.

The Boys took full advantage of Istanbul's strategic position as a clearing house for diplomats, agents, military observers and businessmen who traveled back and forth to all the countries in Europe. Posing as merchants, the Boys studied the movements of these individuals and established valuable contacts, chiefly with Germans, Hungarians, Bulgarians and Poles. Aside from their almost reckless daring, these volunteers had one other outstanding asset which made them invaluable to Allied Intelligence. Typical of most Palestinian Jews, they came from a wide variety of backgrounds and could all speak fluently in many languages.

In terms of my assignment, their most important activity was the setting up of a network of "representatives" in all parts of the Balkans. This was often accomplished by first parachuting one of the Boys into the enemy-occupied territory. Once there, he would organize resistance, establish a channel for transmitting information in and out of the area and, most important to me, facilitate the escape of refugees. So many of the people I helped rescue were started on the road to freedom by the Boys.

After one such mission, we were informed that three boats, the *Marina,* the *Bülbil* and the *Mefkura,* were ready to leave Constantsa. But after three weeks of anxious waiting, still no word from them had come through. I couldn't sleep or eat, I was that beset with worries. Where were they?

August 6, 1944, a Sunday, is branded on my memory. It was the day the tragic news came. My worst fears had been realized. The *Mefkura,* with 306 passengers, including 96 children, had been torpedoed by an unidentified submarine, presumably German, and sunk forty-five miles out of Istanbul only five miles from the Turkish shore.

Then, while we waited feverishly for news of the other

ships, the phones from Istanbul went dead. This was not an uncommon occurrence in that part of the world, but happening then, it thrust us deeper into the gloom that had gripped us.

All through the night I tried unsuccessfully to get the Turks to send out a plane or patrol boat to confirm our first report on the *Mefkura* and ascertain the fate of the others. Finally communications were reopened and we were able to clear up the many garbled reports that had been coming in by word of mouth. It was true about the *Mefkura*, but the *Marina*, carrying 308 refugees, had arrived safely at Istanbul. The *Bülbil* had been sighted fighting a losing battle against bad weather and high seas.

Only a generous gift to the Turkish Red Crescent by way of certain government officials enabled me to get a message to the captain of the *Bülbil* to head for the near-by mountainous shore and not to try to battle his way to Istanbul in torpedo- and mine-filled stormy waters. A convoy of ox-carts was organized to cross the mountains to the sea, bearing food, water and medical supplies and to carry the refugees the rest of the way overland. I begged for permission to join the trek, but Turkish authorities would not allow any foreigners into that area. Unofficially, however, one of the Boys went along to make sure that the badly needed supplies reached their destination.

Early the next morning I boarded one of the rickety Junker trimotor planes the Turks had purchased from the Germans and took off for Istanbul. I was met at the airport with the news that there were only six survivors from the *Mefkura*. And they, including a woman in her eighth month of pregnancy, had swum fourteen miles to shore.

Not long after my arrival, the tattered passengers of the

Bülbil began to land in Istanbul. Among them were the six from the *Mefkura*. But the first joy of seeing them was quickly erased when the bloated bodies of their comrades began to wash up on shore. They, too, had reached land.

Back in my office, I cabled a full report of the disaster to Secretary Hull. In it I suggested that it might be wise for the War Refugee Board to send a replacement for me; a stronger and less emotional man might be more effective in this critical work. Back came his reply that the sinking was an act of war and that the passengers knew the risk they were undertaking. He also commended me for the boats that had got through and insisted that we should continue with our little Dunkirk.

I read the contents of Hull's cable to all the people involved in our rescue activities. Its positive nature and assurance of continued help from Washington lifted the spirits of many who, like me, had succumbed to depression.

The continued flow of refugees necessitated the overcoming of still another blockade. In order for them to come ashore it was necessary for the refugees to hold visas for entry into Palestine which were accepted as proof that they would not remain in Turkey. The visas, of course, were controlled by the British.

A routine was established for me to notify the British Embassy each time one of our ships was sighted off the Turkish coast, and the correct number of visas would go by overnight train from Ankara to Istanbul. This worked admirably for the first six ships.

Came the seventh and in answer to my telephone call I was politely but firmly told that there were no visas. I rushed up the hill to the British Embassy, where I was received by their Minister, Sterndale Bennett, and Knox Helm, their man

in charge of refugee matters. The latter, who was comfortably seated on a couch, told me with a straight face, disturbed only by an occasional languid yawn, that the visas had been lost. Restraining myself, I could only hint that further search might turn them up in some forgotten nook. It was useless.

The refugee boat stood at anchor in the Istanbul harbor. To its passengers any delay might mean the difference between life and death. It was a time for my magic entrée to the White House. I shot off a cable to Lubin in Washington using the code word he had so wisely given me.

The results were instantaneous. The British Embassy called me the next morning and with warmth replacing the chill of the day before, I was told that not only had visas been found, but that Helm, now all smiles and solicitude, would do everything possible to co-operate.

I thanked the Minister graciously, but I couldn't resist remarking to Helm on what big eyes they had in London to find visas so many miles away in Ankara. With no great enthusiasm he smiled and handed me an envelope filled with the treasured pieces of paper that would mean salvation to the people in the harbor. The next morning a rowboat made its way alongside the anchored ship, and the bundle of visas was tossed aboard to waiting hands.

Later, in Washington, I learned how my "message" had worked. Lubin had acted fast. As soon as he received my cable he went directly to the President, who communicated immediately with Churchill.

Not all our obstacles called for such long-distance maneuvering, however. The key word in these deals was borrowed from the Turkish—baksheesh.

To the best of my knowledge the literal meaning of this ubiquitous term is "extra." In our language, it simply means a handout, and just about every business transaction, even legitimate ones, was incomplete without someone getting a baksheesh.

In our work, a baksheesh was more than a social favor; it was a necessity. It opened doors, moved ships and saved lives. But to the accountants in Washington, this kind of business was anathema. In one insistent cable after another from the State Department I was ordered to provide receipts for all disbursements. And, try as I might, even to the point of explaining that most of the Turks I dealt with couldn't write, they were not satisfied.

Finally a cable came which read, "If you cannot get a signature, please get some indication of payment even if it's a mark or a cross."

I replied in kind, using the formal language of State Department communications, "Referring to your number XX of XX date, any cross by the Turks with whom I am dealing would mean a double cross."

I received no more wires on the subject. Much later I was to learn that Secretary Morgenthau, to whom my cable had been referred, had taken it to the President. Typically, FDR roared when he read it.

That cable very likely was behind still another message from Washington which set the Ankara Embassy staff reeling. It was addressed to Ambassador Steinhardt and as best I can remember, it said: "We are flying five million dollars in gold sovereigns from Cairo for use by Ira Hirschmann in his work Stop No accounting for these funds is required. Cordell Hull Secstate."

Steinhardt brought it to my office with the suggestion that

we organize a poker game. In all seriousness, however, this unexpected wealth provided a problem. What do you do with that much gold? We couldn't deposit such treasure in a Turkish bank. Aside from other considerations, all Ankara would know about it.

Ultimately we borrowed a leaf from the Treasury Department book: we put the money underground in a Fort Knox of our own.

I never used one penny of this money. Long before its arrival, I had decided that it would be more politic and fitting if the major expense of our rescue of Jews was borne by their brethren in America. I called on the mandate their leaders had given me in New York, and without hesitation, Paul Baerwald instructed Dr. Joseph J. Schwartz, European director of the American Jewish Joint Distribution Committee, a frequent and invaluable participant in rescue work, to provide the necessary funds for our undercover activity. It came to considerably less than five million.

When I left Turkey the gold was still planted. I have never asked who brought it back to the States.

Another battle that had to be fought in faraway Ankara was boredom. The capital of Turkey was really nothing more than a mountain village, and it offered few of the amenities of civilized life.

With the aid of Carl Ebert, director of the Turkish School of Opera,—a non-Jew who had voluntarily left Nazi Germany, whom I knew through Bruno Walter—and of Gilbert Back, a former member of the Berlin Philharmonic, I decided to do something about this cultural void. I challenged Back to find three Turkish musicians to form a quartet with him, which I offered to sponsor. Somewhere, he dug them up, and al-

though they were certainly not prepared for the demands of Beethoven and Mozart, Back said he could train them.

It was a formidable task. The Turkish musicians were unaccustomed to the discipline this preparation called for. They would arrive late for rehearsal and sometimes, in the middle of a piece, one of them would suddenly discover his fatigue, lay down his instrument and walk away.

I rode herd on them. Back was a tireless taskmaster. I lavished them with baksheesh for additional hours of rehearsal. I would even call from Istanbul to Ankara to keep tabs on their attendance at rehearsal.

Finally Back said they were ready for a concert. This was my opportunity to repay all the hospitality that had been relentlessly forced on me. In exchange for the round of cocktail parties I had attended at the embassies, I was going to give them a chamber music recital. This would even top the musical soirees that the German Ambassador, Franz von Papen, had held with Walter Gieseking, the Nazi pianist.

I was resolved to make this the event of the season. I entrusted Joe Levy, an accomplished gourmet, with all food and drink arrangements. He did nobly. Dulcie Steinhardt, a past mistress in protocol, saw to it that all the diplomats and Turkish government officials were properly seated. In keeping with my position as impresario, I retained control of printing the invitations. Available facilities in Ankara for printing in English being somewhat rudimentary, it took many proofs and revisions before I was satisfied and the finished product was mailed out. My invitation contained the actual musical program of the evening, headed proudly by the name, New Friends of Music, Ankara Chapter.

It was a diplomatic triumph and an artistic tour de force. Harmony prevailed in many quarters where there had been

dissonance. Two years later, on a mission for UNRRA, when I visited Ankara, I was gratified to learn that my hastily organized quartet had strung together and with government sponsorship had become a national quartet.

The first weeks in Turkey completed another phase of my education. I must confess that in my enthusiasm for getting people out of embattled Europe I had not given sufficient thought to where they were to go. I had taken it for granted that the United States, possibly even Great Britain or our other allies, would admit some of these unfortunate souls.

In desperation I turned to the one place where I felt I might get a friendly hearing. I flew to Lydda Airport and once again rode up the Judean hills to Jerusalem. There, to a hastily assembled meeting of Jewish Agency leaders, I described our predicament.

I told them of the first hundreds of refugees, mostly children, who had made their way out of the Balkans into Turkey. Most of them were lying on the docks of Haydarpasa on the Asiatic side of Istanbul. The Turks had given us two weeks to get them out of the country. The alternative was their return to Rumania—certain death.

"I know you are living under the heel of the British," I continued, apologetically. But this was as far as I got. It was Henrietta Szold who stopped me. She held up her hand with a gesture reminiscent of her days as a schoolteacher and said:

"Stop. There's nothing more to say. Bring everyone here. This is their home."

At that moment it all came clear to me. I knew then the truths that Judge Brandeis had tried to impart to me so many years ago. I had learned the meaning and the indispensable necessity of a homeland for the Jews.

Chapter XI

On a barren stretch of scorched earth laid waste by retreating Russians in what had been the Ukraine, the Rumanian government had set up a vast concentration camp where they imprisoned 175,000 Jews and anti-Fascists. This was the infamous camp of Transnistria.

During the abortive German drive on Stalingrad and Baku, Rumania, like a jackal, had gobbled up this land. It was the last of a series of changes in the geography of Rumania, which had gone through a startling metamorphosis in recent years, begun during the days of the honeymoon between Hitler and Stalin. Rumania, as a result of this and other deals, had been forced to cede almost half of its sovereign territory to Hungary, a junior partner in the Axis.

Rumania had a long and ignoble history of anti-Semitism, but major violent pogroms had been sporadic and generally localized. Now we were to witness the application of more modern and efficient methods invented by their Nazi allies. The Rumanians were to demonstrate that they were good pupils.

Since Rumania was close to my post in Turkey, I received

direct reports on the horrors of Transnistria. Thousands were perishing daily because of cold and hunger. Roads were littered with the sick, the dying and the dead. By the time of my arrival in Turkey the camp's population had been reduced to approximately 100,000; the death rate was estimated at 1,000 a day.

To be so close to this death trap and not to be able to do anything about it was an unbearable frustration and weighed heavily on those of us who were charged with the task of rescue. But the stubborn reality was that these men, women and children were prisoners in enemy territory. A hostile frontier, barbed wire, armed guards and constant patrols by airplanes piloted by crews who didn't hesitate to strafe roads leading into the country, all stood in the way of any possible effort to bring these people to safety.

Against a background of Allied bombardment of the Ploesti oilfields and the city of Bucharest, I decided that my only recourse was to find some way to meet with the enemy and to offer some sort of deal. It was flying in the face of reason and certainly running directly counter to normal diplomatic procedure. The situation was desperate, and I could find no alternative to the extreme measures it called for.

Again I was fortified by preparations made in New York before coming to Ankara. In the last days before my departure, I had met Carol Davila, the pre-war Rumanian Minister to the United States, where he was living in exile resulting from his opposition to the deal made with the Nazis by the Rumanian dictator, Antonescu, leader of the Fascist Iron Guard. Without knowing whether it would ever be of any use, I asked for and obtained a letter from Davila to Alexandre Cretzianu, Rumania's Minister to Turkey. Now, having

decided to risk an approach to the enemy, I gave this letter to Gilbert Simond, the representative of the International Red Cross in Ankara, and asked him to act as my intermediary to arrange a clandestine meeting with the Rumanian Minister if he could. The wiry, gentle-humored Swiss responded characteristically, "Why not try?"

To make this overture I used a special government sanction which had been given me by the Secretary of the Treasury, Morgenthau. He alone was authorized to waive the restrictions of the Trading with the Enemy Act which made it a crime for any American citizen to consult or negotiate with the enemy in time of war. Not being a lawyer, I cannot cite the letter of the law or the exact reason why the Treasury Department had this prerogative. Morgenthau had foreseen the possibility of a situation such as the one that confronted me and our embassy in Turkey was advised of his decision while I was en route.

It was an unprecedented vote of confidence and the very first thing Ambassador Steinhardt had mentioned to me on my arrival in Turkey. "They have given you the broadest powers of any envoy that I have known—broader than an ambassador's," he told me, adding, "You are even permitted to deal directly with the enemy."

Still, a meeting with the enemy involved many risks. I knew that I was under the surveillance of German and Japanese agents in Turkey. I learned later that I was even being shadowed by the British. I had been warned in Washington that any revelation of my negotiating with the enemy would destroy my usefulness and force my recall. The State Department would have to disavow any actions that would embarrass our government.

Nor was I by any means incognito or unrecognized. I can

still recall with something of a shudder the evening I heard startling proof of this. I was in my hotel room turning the dials on my radio in quest of some good music when I accidentally caught a propaganda broadcast from Berlin which startlingly demanded, "What is Jew Hirschmann doing in Ankara? Certainly, he can be up to no good."

I was plagued by the news of what was happening in Transnistria. While the flow of refugees across the Black Sea was encouraging, it was heartbreakingly slow. I was impatient for a major break-through.

Simond was almost as excited as I was when he brought me the news that Cretzianu had agreed to a rendezvous. It was set for Saturday evening at Simond's house on the outskirts of Ankara.

By agreement, I arrived an hour before the time for our meeting. I paced the floor of Simond's modest living room which was almost hermetically sealed by blinds. As the time grew near, I succumbed to the temptation of the piano standing there in open invitation for the release of my tension. The introductory chords of the Beethoven *Opus 90 Sonata,* so similar in their forceful enunciation to the stirring opening of the *Fidelio Overture,* served me well.

Simond, who had come into the room during my impromptu recital, was now pacing the floor. Then the doorbell rang. Cretzianu had arrived.

He turned out to be an attractive and urbane man in his early forties. Despite his years as a diplomat, Cretzianu couldn't hide the same nervousness that had attacked me.

I cited the Emergency Order of the President of the United States that authorized my discussion with him, and we sat down to talk. "Do you mind if I take notes?" were his first words. For an hour we spoke in generalities. Our pencils were

poised over our blank pads, but neither of us wrote a word. Nothing worth reporting had transpired.

As best I could, I steered the conversation from one subject to another, searching his face for an indication of interest or any emotional reaction. My clue came after a casual mention of the Russians. I could sense almost as much, as I could see a shadow pass over his face. Suddenly he said:

"It's the Russians we fear, not the Americans."

This was what I had been looking for. Dropping all caution and with it all formality, I looked straight into Cretzianu's eyes and coldly, almost brutally, said: "Mr. Minister, you, Antonescu and your families are going to be killed."

He winced, but I continued in the same vein: "The Russians will do it."

After a pause during which neither of us said a word, I resumed: "I will offer you a visa for every member of your family in exchange for one simple act which will cost you nothing."

"And what is that?" he queried.

"Open the door of the camp in Transnistria. These are your citizens, but if you don't want them, we will take them."

He seemed genuinely shocked. "And why does the President of the United States send a personal representative to negotiate for some Jews?"

"That is why the United States is what it is," I countered, "and why Rumania is where it is today."

At that moment Simond, who had left the room for a few minutes, returned, bearing a tea tray. It was perfectly timed.

Over the tea both of us relaxed. I told Cretzianu that I knew of his father's fine record as a diplomat in Washington in the 1920's and I expressed the hope that in better times he might continue in the tradition of his family. He might

even serve in the United States. This brought a bemused smile, but I could see that he was preoccupied with our previous conversation.

Encouraged by the rift in his armor resulting from this personal conversation, I ventured far beyond my terms of reference and as a tentative gambit said, "Why not get out of the war? We will offer you an honorable peace and you will have the distinction of being the first Balkan country to break away from Hitler."

Of course I had no authority to do this, but Cretzianu responded directly. "If we could only have some assurance that American influence would remain in the Balkans," he said.

After two and a half hours, he asked, "Precisely what do you want and what do you offer?" I was ready for this. "We request first," I replied, "that you disband the camp at Transnistria and that those remaining be permitted to return to their homes immediately. Second, that you release five thousand children, facilitate their passage to Constantsa, provide exit permits for them, and expedite the debarkation of ships which we will provide to take these children to Istanbul and from there to Haifa in Palestine. Third, we ask that Antonescu put an end to all persecution and repressive acts against minorities in Rumania."

Cretzianu finished writing his notes on my demands before he said: "It is not impossible. I promise to recommend it. But what will you offer in return?"

"It should not be necessary to offer anything to a government to have it stop killing its own citizens," I said. "But I promise you visas for entrance to the United States for you and the three members of your family. In addition, I will offer you the good will of the Government of the United

States of America to serve as an indication of an open door for you to break with the Nazis."

We parted cordially after Cretzianu promised that he would immediately fly to Bucharest where he would "recommend warmly" his government's acceptance of my proposal. He would get an answer through to me by way of Gilbert Simond.

I waited an hour before I said good night to Simond and made my circuitous way through back streets to my hotel.

A week later there was a call from Simond to hurry to his home. I was about to leave for Instanbul, but the apparent breath of urgency in his voice made me change my plans. I hastened to the little house on the side street.

In less than five minutes the dapper Rumanian envoy, who must have been waiting near-by, rushed into the room. The slick, urbane manner had disappeared. Catching his breath with difficulty he read snatches from a telegram from Antonescu. General Gheorghe Potopeanu had already been instructed to break up the camp in Transnistria. The prisoners were already leaving for Bucharest. The 5,000 children would soon reach Constantsa for embarkation. All persecutions were stopped. Coincidentally, the telegram ended in the middle of a sentence. The decoding device had broken down. "I must get the rest of the telegram," he said, and was soon out of the room.

The next day while I was sitting in Ambassador Steinhardt's office, the telephone rang. It was Simond. He said: "I have just had a report from our representative in Bucharest. It reads: 'Due to reasons unknown to me, the camp in Transnistria has been disbanded.' "

I stared straight ahead of me; instead of reacting with excitement, I was stunned. The feeling of relief that gradually

came over me was indescribable. A huge weight seemed to fall off my shoulders, followed by an awareness that it was now my turn to deliver. I couldn't duck my commitments to Cretzianu.

Before he left, Cretzianu had said something which, while it caused a twinge of conscience, strongly reinforced my belief in unhesitant, affirmative action. He said: "If this means so much to you in the United States, why didn't you come sooner? You could have saved more lives."

Then and there, I resolved never again to indulge in hesitant mercy. All those in my own family, friends, businessmen who had tried to discourage me from undertaking what seemed to them in New York to be a hopeless mission, were wrong, pessimistically and unimaginatively wrong. And I blamed myself for not having acted sooner.

I wrote a report of my negotiations and sent it off to Washington. Not trusting the cables or intervening desks at the State Department, I held back my promise of visas for Cretzianu's family but requested permission to return to the States for consultation. I wanted to discuss that delicate matter in person.

Luck was with me in Washington. Adolph Berle, a former Professor at Columbia University and an old colleague in the La Guardia administration, had, in my absence, been appointed Assistant Secretary of State in charge of refugee matters. I told him the entire story and explained the promise I had made as a price for the release of the people in Transnistria. To his credit, he agreed with alacrity and recommended to Secretary Hull that the visas be issued and made available at the American Embassy in Ankara.

Many of those released from the camp at Transnistria have survived. I meet them all over the country and in Canada on

my speaking trips. Only recently I met a man who had left the camp as a boy and made his way to Palestine in one of the little boats. He is now the manager of the King David Hotel in Jerusalem.

The broader implications in my talks with Cretzianu tragically were not realized. For, in spite of my lack of authorization to suggest peace talks, I had made an opening for negotiations with Rumania. This was contained in my report to Washington. Great Britain, the allied power controlling that theater of operations, had been fully advised. They made contact with the Rumanians but while they shifted their negotiations to British Headquarters in Cairo, the Russians moved into Rumania which became firmly established behind the Iron Curtain.

As was to be expected, Antonescu and his henchmen as well as their families were all executed by the Russians. Their Minister to Ankara, Alexandre Cretzianu, escaped with his family. In fact, some months later, he visited me in my office in New York.

Most of the former inmates of Transnistria are still trapped in the vise of Communist Russia. Some of them have made their way to freedom in Israel. At the risk of seeming to be facetious about a matter of the utmost seriousness, I must say that this was the best merchandising deal I ever made in a lifetime of dealing. We saved 100,000 lives in exchange for four visas given as bribes.

Chapter XII

While I was preoccupied with these negotiations in Rumania, the Boys had been doing business as usual behind the lines in Bulgaria. There 45,000 Jews had been reduced to penury by the application of a local version of the infamous Nuremberg Laws. Three ships had been lined up to carry refugees directly from Bulgarian ports. But when the first of them, the *Maritza*, had been sunk on its return from Istanbul, the Bulgarian Government, unwilling to risk any more boats, put a stop to the traffic. No more ships would be released for carrying refugees. The door of Bulgaria was locked from the inside.

We managed to bring a trickle of refugees out of Bulgaria by the difficult overland route, but it was too slow. I feared that unless we could step up our rescue operation, most of the 45,000 were doomed.

While anti-Semitism was not exactly an innovation in Bulgaria, no organized movement had existed there. But with the prodding of their Nazi bosses and the ambitions of certain local would-be fuehrers, repressive laws had been

put into effect and were taking their toll. I resolved to try my hand again at trading with the enemy.

Here I had the help of Dr. Floyd H. Black, president of Robert College, an American institution in Istanbul. When I first met Black, he was the Bulgarian specialist on the staff of Burton Y. Berry, our Consul General in Istanbul. Before the war Black had been president for eighteen years of the American College in Sofia, the capital of Bulgaria, and was married to a Bulgarian girl. Black spoke the language fluently and was an expert on the country's political picture.

The briefing Black gave me was invaluable. He explained how Bulgaria, a poor and underdeveloped little country, had blundered into the Nazi camp. The result was that for the second time in a single generation they had picked a loser. The Germans milked them dry, robbing them of their only assets, their crops and their cattle. Ten Nazi divisions, 120,000 men, held them captive.

Still, in our meetings at Robert College, high on a bluff at the narrow neck of the Bosporus where it empties into the Black Sea, he would reiterate his faith in the traditional Bulgarian leaders. Black was certain that they were striving to pull out from under German control and I banked on his judgment.

Meanwhile, I received information that Nicholas Balabanoff, the Bulgarian Minister to Turkey, was in Sofia. At my urging, Black got a message to the Prime Minister in Sofia to urge Balabanoff to meet with me on his return to Ankara. A date was set, again at the home of Simond, the indispensable man from the Red Cross.

So, in the same setting, the scene played earlier was repeated. My adversary, however, was of a different stripe. In the place of the handsome, urbane Cretzianu, I was now

faced by the rotund figure of a bluff politician of the old school, complete with flowing black beard.

At our first meeting I got nowhere. It was largely a matter of exchanging credentials and sounding each other out. The one point Balabanoff wanted to impress on me at that time was that his government would welcome a cessation of Allied air raids on Bulgarian cities. His phrase was that they would appreciate an "omission" of the raids. This seemed to be the Bulgarian line during those last days of their belligerency. I was informed by the State Department that the same story had been repeated in greater detail and with considerable color by the Bulgarian Minister in Stockholm when approached on the same matter.

When we resumed our conversations at our second meeting, Balabanoff's tone had changed completely. Now he was a typical Balkan politician looking for a favor, all smiles and good humor. He had good news for me, he told me in fluent German. There had been a change in the Bulgarian Government. Bagrianoff, the new Premier, was a much more temperate man than his predecessor. Balabanoff expressed assurances that the people who had been oppressed would now be released.

Of course, this was not all news to me. We had our intelligence reports and they included the strong possibility that the Russians would soon be moving into Bulgaria. In fact, there were even rumors of secret peace talks. (It later turned out that Russia declared war on Bulgaria in order to send her troops in to hold it.)

When Balabanoff continued to profess Bulgaria's intention to rescind the anti-Jewish laws, I decided to do something which ordinarily would be considered naïve. I asked him for a letter committing his government to the cessation of

their acts of repression and persecution. To my astonishment, Balabanoff amiably agreed. He said the letter would be delivered to me through Simond as the representative of the International Red Cross. I couldn't believe it. Governments do not address communications to belligerents, so I challenged him good-naturedly by asking him when I could expect it. "Tomorrow at one," he replied.

Soon after one the next day Simond arrived at my office bearing an envelope which contained two copies of a letter written in French on Balabanoff's personal stationery and signed by him. We read it together. It was an amazing document, a note from a Minister of Bulgaria, a country we were at war with, criticizing his former Government. It read:

> There is no doubt that the new Bulgarian Government regrets exceedingly all the anti-Jewish measures taken by our country and that it does not in the least approve these measures.
>
> I have the impression that the Government intends to abolish the present laws concerning the Jews at an opportune moment. However, for the present, it has firmly decided to do away with arbitrary methods in the application of these laws, as well as with all restrictive measures not provided by such laws.
>
> BALABANOFF

When I showed the letter with Balabanoff's signature to Dr. Black, he could hardly believe it. "How did you get it out of him?" he asked repeatedly. Then, pacing the floor of his office, he said: "We will hold him and his government to these promises."

I was realist enough to see that at that moment the new

government, which had turned out the Fascists, feared the Russians. They were on a defensive rebound looking for favors. If so, it was our chance for a quick break-through. I saw an opening which, the more I thought of it, seemed to open wider. I decided to exploit it to the utmost. A bold thought flashed across my mind: to demand that the Bulgarian Government save the entire persecuted population *inside* Bulgaria.

During my regular evening walk in the blacked-out city, I outlined my strategy, using my assistant Herbert Katzki as a sounding board. It seemed wild-eyed at first, but as we talked it assumed perfectly logical and realistic lines. We would demand that the government call the puppet Parliament into special session at once and strike the monstrous Nuremberg-bred laws off the books officially. Then there would be no need to take the Jews out of Bulgaria. They need not be refugees.

These demands could not come from me directly but I could take advantage of the connections in Bulgaria still retained by Dr. Black. I knew that a letter addressed to him would eventually reach the new government. His wife, the daughter of a Bulgarian Army General, was the major conduit through which my message would reach the appropriate political figures. So I wrote it, confirming the receipt of Balabanoff's letter and noting that while, in my opinion, it was but a first step, I had forwarded it to Washington. I continued:

> The Bulgarian Government stands today in the position where it can create a priceless measure of good will (without, as I see it, giving up anything fundamental) by taking the essential steps without delay to abrogate the scandalous anti-Jewish laws and by permitting us to

announce it forthrightly to the world. Whatever sacrifice on its own part is necessary at this time for it to do so, I am confident that the scales will weigh heavily in its own favor after the decision is announced.

While waiting for an answer, I wrote a digest of my discussions with Balabanoff as well as the formal proposals I had made. I suggested to Washington that this information be forwarded to Averill Harriman, then our Ambassador in Moscow. I emphasized Balabanoff's implication of his government's excellent relationship with the Soviet Union and that the Russian Embassy in Ankara had been advised of our talks. I understand that Harriman, in turn, pressed his Russian counterpart to urge the Bulgarian Government to accede to my plan for the liberation of their Jewish population.

I never knew whether the actual letter reached the Bulgarian Prime Minister, but I learned later that he knew its contents.

Simultaneously, I sent a long telegram to Washington in which I outlined in detail my plan for rescuing the entire Jewish population of Bulgaria within the country itself, instead of in small groups which had to travel over difficult and perilous routes into strange lands. In my enthusiasm, I committed a signal error which earned for me the only critical reply from the State Department during my entire mission.

At the conclusion of my message, I pointed out that since most of the refugees might wish to return to their native countries after the war, my plan to keep them at home would avoid a postwar problem of relocation.

Back came one of those near-anonymous cables from Washington which politely referred me to my original terms

of reference. These, it pointed out quite succinctly, did not include any reference to postwar problems. As for the broader program, the telegraphic reply did not even mention it.

The Bulgarian Parliament did reconvene, however, on September 1, 1944. And in the sessions, which we heard broadcast daily in Istanbul, revocation of the anti-Jewish laws was high on the agenda. But was the new government strong and independent enough, even with their new-found courage, to fly in the face of the Nazis in the Parliament and the Nazi troops still holding their airports and other strategic places? Finally word got back to me that the minority group of 45,000 could only be considered "incidental" in the broad picture of the struggle of the entire Bulgarian population against the Nazis. I sent a message back through Balabanoff that if it were such a small matter, it should be that much easier for them to accomplish it and win the good will of the American people.

Each night at eleven, our Office of War Information in Istanbul circulated translations monitored by our people of all the official announcements and communiqués broadcast by the belligerents. A different colored paper was used for each country for quick reference. Each night I would look for Bulgaria's blue sheet, eager for the words that would mark the liberation of "my" 45,000.

Finally it came. I was at Abdullah's, the famous restaurant on the Pera, when a messenger found me. My hand trembled as I took the piece of blue paper from him, but one word caught my eye which was sufficient to give me new strength —"revoked." I read through the translated announcement at top speed, eager to absorb the words as fast as I could. It was all there. The anti-Jewish laws had been revoked; the entire

Jewish population was free and all property would be returned to its rightful owners.

This action by the Bulgarian Government proved to me that a vacuum existed in the country in which the new government was anxious to please the Western powers rather than the Russians who were poised at its borders. Balabanoff, a seasoned Balkan politician, had read the situation accurately and was ready "to do business," despite a technical state of war. He evidently believed as I did that protocol plays no part in power politics. But, the Russians moved in and are still there in charge.

My fast footwork had, at least, won my immediate objective—45,000 people had been set free.

Chapter XIII

Before my return to the States, three months after taking a six-weeks' leave of absence from Bloomingdale's, I was still confronted by much unfinished business. We had yet to implement all the concessions I had wrung from Cretzianu. For there were still the 5,000 Rumanian Jewish children awaiting transportation to Palestine: we needed ships to cross the Black Sea.

After considerable pressure, the Turkish Foreign Minister, Numan Menemencioglu, made available to us the S.S. *Tari*, a 4,050-ton, French-built passenger ship. Myron Black had been sent by the War Shipping Board to help me negotiate for the *Tari*, and we finally settled on a charter for $175,000 which the War Refugee Board authorized.

Normally, the *Tari* carried 900 passengers. After Black and I inspected it, special companionways and accommodations were built in the hold to provide for an additional 500 passengers.

We did not dare send the *Tari* out to sea, however, without safe conduct flags. To do so, in the mine- and submarine-infested waters of the Black Sea, would have been courting

death for our passengers. These flags were usually negotiated for by the International Red Cross representatives on the scene to permit the safe transport of noncombatants such as children, sick and wounded. In this instance, all the belligerent nations in the area except Germany had agreed to safe conduct for the *Tari.*

I appealed to Gilbert Simond to operate on a different tack. I begged him to approach von Papen, the German Ambassador, directly, not as a German official but as a Catholic. Simond, a French Swiss, was of that faith and it was no secret that von Papen was a high-ranking and influential lay leader in the Church. Simond promised, as ever, to "give it a try."

The question was still pending on April 8, 1944, when I climbed into my railway car at Ankara for the first leg of my homeward journey. Among those who had come down to see me off and wish me *bon voyage* was the ubiquitous Simond. In his high-pitched, French-accented voice, straining to be heard over the others, he gave me my best going-away gift. "Don't worry about the *Tari,*" he said. "I have seen von Papen and it will be all right."

But my joy was to be short-lived. In Washington I learned that the *Tari* never sailed. Allied fortunes in the war having improved considerably, the Turks, with their peculiar notion of "neutrality," had begun to pay closer attention to our demands. One of these was the cessation of the shipment of chrome, indispensable in the manufacture of hard steel, to Germany. An enraged von Papen gained revenge by refusing safe conduct to 5,000 orphaned children.

We were forced to return to the dangerous and frustratingly slow method of shipping the children and other refugees by the little illegal boats, picking their way through

the mines. I was still relying, however, on Simond's direct line to von Papen, which might be tried again when the wily Nazi diplomat was more deeply on the defensive.

A new dismal development, which plagued me as well as the rest of us on rescue missions, was the almost unbelievable reports which were leaking out of Hungary. Up to a month earlier, this Fascist nation, which had stood by and even collaborated with Hitler's march to power, had nevertheless been a haven for refugees of all kinds. It was an escape hatch for prisoners-of-war, and the native Jewish population had largely been left alone. But on March 19, the Nazis, sided by The Cross and Dagger, the Hungarian Fascist party, engineered the overthrow of the Von Kállay government and set up a puppet regime, complete with their own Nuremberg laws.

According to my information, the Nazis, under the malignant guidance and leadership of Adolf Eichmann, the S.S. Lieutenant Colonel in charge of the "final solution" seemed resolved to accomplish in a few weeks in Hungary what had taken years in Poland and the rest of Europe. Throughout the country, transports to Auschwitz were getting under way, especially in the Russo-Carpathian area which had a particularly heavy Jewish population. But I had to go home with this unresolved problem still weighing on my mind.

On my arrival in Washington, I was able to give a good report. After all, the doors to Transnistria were opened; there was a steady flow of refugees across Turkey and on to Palestine, and the machinery for escape, well oiled with baksheesh, was working as efficiently as could be expected. My chiefs were overjoyed with my progress and they, especially Morgenthau and Pehle, were eager for me to return to Turkey immediately. I was in full agreement with them. I

wanted to complete the job I had begun and, frankly, I found it close to impossible to interest myself in department store matters. After dealing in human lives, merchandising seemed unimportant. Then, suddenly, the decision to return to Turkey was taken out of my hands.

I was in Cincinnati in June when I was ordered to Washington and rushed there by special plane. The emergency which called for such speedy action had resulted from the critical situation in Hungary that had been developing during my last days in Turkey.

Two Hungarians, alleged Nazi agents, had been flown to Istanbul by way of Vienna in a German courier plane. They carried a fantastic offer from Adolf Eichmann to exchange Jewish lives for military vehicles. The British were opposed to negotiating with them, but President Roosevelt, alert to an opening through which lives might be saved, wanted me to interview these agents and report back to Washington.

I was handed an *aide-mémoire* from Lord Halifax which outlined the "psychological warfare" reasons for British opposition, and was then brought to the President to receive his personal orders. He admonished me to "keep talking. Cable back everything you hear. While you talk, these people still have a chance to live."

Before I left Washington, I took with me a letter from President Roosevelt which stated his personal interest in my mission. It was to be an invaluable link in the chain of events tying me to Adolf Eichmann.

Meanwhile, Treasury Secretary Morgenthau solved my problems with my employers by simply commandeering my services "for the convenience of the government." I was given an indefinite leave of absence.

By the time I reached Turkey, six days later, the agents

were no longer there. As our own officials were loath "to buck the British," it took considerable pressure on the resident British Minister, Sterndale Bennett, before I learned that the Hungarians had been spirited to Aleppo in Syria where British Intelligence officers had picked them up and taken them to Cairo. I rushed to Egypt and after heated discussions with Lord Francis Moyne, the British Deputy Minister of State in the Middle East, climaxed by my submitting President Roosevelt's letter for his inspection, I was able to meet the so-called Nazis.

The two men I had traveled so far to see turned out to be Joel Brand, a representative of the Jewish Community of Budapest, and one Gyorgy, a converted Jew who was formerly a Hungarian Intelligence officer and who, in fact, was there as Eichmann's man to keep an eye on Brand. Gyorgy was a double-agent whom the British had jailed. We left him languishing there.

Brand, however, a short, stocky man whom I took to be in his middle thirties, was in a different class. He showed signs of extreme tension and great fatigue.

Brand brushed aside my opening amenities. "I have had a very difficult time," he said. "Everyone has been polite, but it is as though I had been put in prison. Still, I can understand it is necessary to keep me away from other people."

I asked him about conditions in Hungary. We had heard shocking accounts of how the Germans had taken over the country in March, 1944, and overnight had converted this last haven for refugees in Europe into a charnel house.

"It is true," Brand said. "What has been done in Germany, Austria, Czechoslovakia and Poland over a period of years has been done in Hungary in a few weeks' time: twelve

thousand of my people are shipped to the camps every day."

"Why did you leave?" I asked.

"Because I had been sent to come here and try to make . . ." I interrupted. "Who sent you?"

"Two different sources sent me: on the one side, the Nazis, to make a bargain; and on the other, the Jews, to be their emissary."

"Who suggested the idea that you should come here?" I asked. "Where was it suggested?"

"Eichmann called me shortly after the occupation of Hungary. He suggested that I should come with his offer."

"What did he suggest to you that he wanted?" I asked.

"The main thing was trucks."

"How many?"

"He said ten thousand, but . . ."

"What else?"

"He only spoke about trucks. He said he would use them only on the eastern front. Another man who was present—I did not know his name—said I should also ask for coffee, chocolate, tea and soap. [It should be noted that the deal called specifically for the trucks to be loaded with 2,000,000 cakes of soap, 200 tons of cocoa, 800 tons of coffee and 200 tons of tea—all valuable merchandise on the German black market.] Then Eichmann mentioned money—American dollars, Swiss francs and some South American money."

It is interesting to note that Eichmann derided his fellow officers for having made provisions for escape after the inevitable Nazi surrender, while he, according to his own account, intended to fight it out to the end in the mountains of Austria. It would seem that, at least a year before V-E Day,

he had given serious thought to the idea of flight—even to his eventual destination.

The infamous blackmail offer of a million Jews in exchange for 10,000 trucks I knew would not be acceptable. But, based on my earlier experience, and hints I received from Brand, I discouraged any discussion regarding trucks and other commodities and switched the talk to cash.

No immediate results came from my meeting with Brand, but I felt that we now had a solid indication that certain highly placed Nazis, in the S.S. of all places, were ready to do business. In Brand's words, "They could all be bought." I said all this in my report and strongly recommended that such talks be moved to a neutral country, away from British influence if possible. This was the beginning of many negotiations, principally in Switzerland and Sweden, which did result in the rescue of some thousands of refugees. A few thousand perhaps, by comparison with the millions who fell in the Nazi holocaust, but I am still convinced that each individual rescue was a defeat for Eichmann's demonic "final solution of the Jewish question."

I have not dwelt on the details of my involvement with Joel Brand and, through him, with Adolf Eichmann. It is a story that has been told many times, particularly during the subsequent historic trial of Eichmann in Jerusalem seventeen years later. But I do wish to enter on the record a word of praise and understanding for Joel Brand. A typically middle-class businessman, Brand was forced by history to play a role for which he was ill prepared. His knowledge of German, his experience as a trader and the forcefulness of his wife put him on the spot as a negotiator for his fellow Jews in Budapest and eventually as an envoy for Eichmann. Who, indeed, was prepared to bear such a tremendous responsi-

bility? And Brand, to this day, is shackled by guilt feelings resulting from the failure of his mission. Convinced that thousands of Jews were killed as a result of this failure, at the rate of 12,000 a day, like the Ancient Mariner he retells his story and seeks to place the blame.

I was absolutely convinced of his sincerity almost immediately at our first meeting in Cairo. My assessment of his character was shared by many others, including Moshe Sharett, later Prime Minister of Israel. But the forces of history that robbed him of his anonymity and personal security also conspired to cloak him with the garb of martyr. We can only hope that his vindication resulting from facts disclosed at Eichmann's trial will free him from his fearsome burden.

To report on an epilogue to this bizarre adventure, I must step out of the chronology of my story. When the startling news of Eichmann's capture in Argentina electrified the world, I was resolved to go to his trial. This was to be my rendezvous with the man whose callous and cynical blackmail scheme had burned itself into my consciousness and had cost me countless sleepless nights in the years between.

Dan Mich, editorial director of *Look* magazine sent me to Jerusalem for the trial where I broadcast my reactions daily over a syndicate of radio stations organized by "Shap" Shapiro, the magazine's promotional wizard. My first reaction, based on the outward appearance of the Nazi mass murderer, was one of anticlimax. I am sure that my feelings were shared by the five hundred journalists, broadcasters, legal experts and diplomatic observers who had traveled from every section of the world for this historic trial. Eichmann just didn't look his part.

Since that first day I have read and reread many of the

millions of words written about the appearance of the prisoner in the glass-enclosed dock—"slight, insignificant, clerkly, balding, impassive" are samples. But it wasn't long before Eichmann himself as well as the team of skilled prosecutors headed by Israel's Attorney General Gideon Hausner gave the lie to the picture that Eichmann and his attorney were attempting to present—"the small sausage"—the squeamish, sentimental and well-disciplined patriot who had performed an unpleasant duty, forced to obey hateful orders from above. Not the least of the damaging evidence against Eichmann was Joel Brand's vivid description of his interview with him before leaving on the fateful desperate mission. Standing in the witness box, glaring at his nemesis, Brand aroused the courtroom when he barked in barracks-room German the phrase Eichmann had snapped at him in his Budapest headquarters, a phrase which has become the hallmark of Eichmann's grisly career. "Blut für Ware . . . Ware für Blut. (Blood for goods . . . goods for blood.)"

Israel's court rendered its verdict. Eichmann has been hanged and his ashes strewn over the Mediterranean. I don't believe that anyone ever seriously doubted his guilt, but to me, his end is of little consequence. The important function of the trial has been served. The world now knows beyond any question that the mass murder of six million Jews was not a part of World War II. It was a simultaneous war against a defenseless people. The defense first introduced by the war criminals at Nuremberg, that they merely followed their leaders, did not hold water for Eichmann either, in his trial for "crimes against the Jewish people and humanity." The perpetrators of the crimes were too well dispersed and their criminal efforts too enthusiastic and efficient for their actions to be regarded as merely the results of following orders.

It was a stark drama that was played in the courtroom at Beit Haam in Jerusalem for all the world to see. The piling up of climax on climax was almost unbearable. But one highlight will stay with me forever. It was that moment when Gideon Hausner, himself a refugee from Germany, rose to address the court. His opening words will achieve immortality in the history and literature of our tragic era:

> When I stand before you, Judges of Israel, in this court to accuse Adolf Eichmann, I do not stand alone. Here with me at this moment stand six million prosecutors, but, alas, they cannot rise to level the finger of accusation in the direction of the glass dock and cry out, *"J'accuse,"* against the man who sits there, because their ashes have been piled high up in the mounds of Auschwitz and the fields of Treblinka or spilled into the rivers of Poland, and their graves are scattered throughout the length and breadth of Europe. Their blood cries to heaven, but their voices cannot be heard.

During my search for Brand and even before my return to the Middle East, the deportation of Hungarian Jews had been stepped up to a rate that indicated the frantic efforts of Eichmann and his murdering crew to finish their genocide before the end of the war. Facts I have since learned have corroborated fully the reports that had come to us from the underground. From April 10 to May 21, twenty-nine transports had gone from Hungary to Auschwitz, carrying 94,667 Jews to their death. The next seven days saw fifty-eight transports take away 184,049 Jews, and from May 28 to June 7, another 175,415 were slaughtered. Finally, between June 6 and June 28, 61,944 more of these defenseless people were rounded up and shipped to the gas chambers, leaving all of

Hungary outside of Budapest "*judenrein* (free of Jews)"—the most devastating mass annihilation of human lives in the history of mankind.

We didn't know all the facts in Turkey, but enough were available to us to realize that time was racing against death. Something had to be done to save the Jewish population of Budapest—approximately a quarter of a million men, women and children.

I turned once again to Gilbert Simond. I pleaded with him to prevail upon his friends in the Catholic Church to help us in the name of humanity. Despite our earlier failures to get co-operation from von Papen, I thought that this might be the time to make a deal with him. We had broken one of the German codes at the American Embassy and from these decoded messages I knew that von Papen, a sly fox with a chameleon talent for self-preservation, was resisting cables calling him back to Berlin "at once for consultation." Having escaped earlier purges, von Papen no doubt was not ready to appear before his Fuehrer at this eleventh hour when the Third Reich was crumbling. His return cables pleaded "illness," although I am sure I wasn't the only one who saw him take his brisk daily constitutional on Ankara's main street.

After a short spell during which I assume Simond made an effort along the lines I had requested, he made a sounder suggestion that we go directly to the Apostolic Delegate of the Church who was then in residence on Buyuk Ada (Principo), an island in the Marmora Sea, forty minutes by boat from Istanbul. I jumped at the suggestion and Simond arranged a meeting with the delegate, Angelo Roncalli.

It was a beautiful late summer day when Simond and I went aboard one of the tiny excursion boats that made

regular trips from Istanbul to the four islands in the Marmora. I knew the area from having spent many weekends at the small rented house of Carl Ebert and his wife Gertie on Heybeli, the island next to Principo. But this was my first visit to the idyllic little island that still prohibited the use of motor vehicles on its quiet shores. Principo had been noticed by the outside world when the Russians chose it as the first place of exile for Leon Trotsky after his fall from favor in the Soviet Union.

The house of the Pope's highest emissary in the Middle East was a spacious, old-fashioned home sitting high atop a hill. Hidden from below by lush foliage, it nevertheless afforded a stunning view of the sea in all directions. We were ushered into a well-appointed room where we waited for Roncalli.

After a few minutes, a short, rotund man, built along the lines of Fiorello La Guardia, entered the room. Good humor was immediately evident in his eyes, twinkling under his black skullcap. Warmly and graciously he welcomed us in Italian, bidding us be seated. As I did, I offered a silent prayer of thanks for the Italian I had learned some years back: it established an easy contact between us.

Once Simond and I were comfortably settled, our host turned to a small cupboard from which he took a bottle of red wine. After admiring its color, he poured out three glasses and insisted on drinking to our health. Anxious about my mission, I discreetly tried to introduce the reason for my visit. But Roncalli brushed me aside, saying, "That will come later. First we must enjoy the view, the conversation and the wine."

His personality was so radiant and his conviviality so genuine that for the moment I let the purpose of my presence

escape me. In fact, it wasn't until a second bottle had been downed that he would permit any thought of practical discussion. Then, suddenly, he announced, "*Dunque, cominciamo*. . . . Now, let us begin."

Roncalli listened intently as I outlined the desperate plight of the Jews in Hungary. I cited the meager statistics available to me and the many eyewitness accounts of underground operatives. As I emphasized each salient point, he nodded sympathetically. Then he pulled his chair up closer and quietly asked, "Do you have any contact with people in Hungary who will co-operate?" After my affirmative reply, he hesitated a few moments before asking, "Do you think the Jews there would be willing to undergo baptism ceremonies?"

Not prepared for this suggestion, I equivocated a bit and said that I could only guess or assume that if it meant saving their lives they would be ready to do so gratefully. I added, "I know what I would do."

He went on to say that he had reason to believe that some baptismal certificates had already been issued by nuns to Hungarian Jews. The Nazis had recognized these as credentials and had permitted their holders to leave the country.

We agreed that we would communicate with his representatives in Hungary and that I would get in touch with our underground connections to arrange for either large-scale baptism of Jews, or at least certificates to be issued to women and children. It would be up to them to decide later whether they would wish to remain in the Church or "go their way."

The proposal and agreement had been accomplished in what seemed like a few minutes. It was clear to me that Roncalli had considered this plan before my arrival, and that

he had created an atmosphere in which to test my credentials, my discretion and my ability to help put the operation into practical effect. I had no doubt that the wheels would soon be set in motion in Hungary for Operation Baptism under the auspices and with the mercy of the Catholic Church.

Simond and I were silent as we sailed back to Istanbul in the little ferryboat. Somehow, we were awed by the scope and direction of the events of the afternoon, arrived at so simply and without inhibition, but so fraught with possibilities. In our silence we were attempting to take stock of their implications.

My mind flashed back to the first moment when I had heard the name Roncalli. It dated back to the first days after my arrival at the Ankara Palas Hotel in Ankara. I was informed that the Chief Rabbi of Palestine, Isaac Halevi Herzog, was in the hotel, confined to his room by illness. Fortunately, his brilliant young son, Yaacov, was with him to attend him. Herzog had come on his own initiative to try to use his persuasion to help rescue the persecuted Jews. The Rabbi told me that chief among the men whom he planned to see was the Catholic Apostolic Delegate—Angelo Roncalli.

I had spent several rewarding hours at the bedside of this venerable rabbi. Originally from Dublin, Ireland, he spoke with a beautiful English-Irish brogue. To me, an American, this seemed charmingly incongruous coming from the lips of an Old-Testament sage with a white beard. His words of wisdom and faith could not have been better timed for me —about to set out on an uncharted sea of human rescue.

On the way back to the mainland I recalled my bedside

visits with the Chief Rabbi. Might it even have been possible that this means of rescue of Hungarian Jews had been broached by Roncalli in his fateful visit in February, 1944?

We were approaching twilight and as our little steamer skimmed through the water, the lengthening shadows of the fading day stretched ahead of us like moving phantoms across the sea. Could this be a portent, I mused, of the lifting of a curtain to reveal a new freedom for those who waited for our help?

For some unaccountable reason, historians have glossed over this instance of warmth and compassion in a period of violence and hate. In my report to Washington I stated, "For the record, it should be stated that the Catholic hierarchy, which enjoys a large influence in Hungary, took unusual spontaneous measures to rescue Hungarian Jewish citizens wherever possible. This was reported to you in my No. 131, August 12, and related to the baptism of thousands of Hungarian Jews in air-raid shelters, in spite of energetic Nazi protests."

Some years later at a Thanksgiving Day dinner in New York, I was seated next to a woman who spoke with a European accent. When our conversation revealed that she had come from Hungary, I asked casually if she had known any Jews who had been baptized in Budapest in the last days of the war. Quickly and nervously, with obviously controlled emotion, she said: "I was baptized and saved at the last hour in a bomb-cellar." She went on to describe how the underground in Budapest had given her a certificate of baptism from the Catholic Church which served as her passport for escape from the Nazis to Switzerland and eventually to the United States. Hearing similar stories from many

others in the course of the ensuing years has never failed to move me deeply.

One of the highlights of my trip to Israel to cover the Eichmann trial was a reunion with Joel Brand and my first meeting with his wife, Hansi, an unsung heroine of the Budapest underground. Brand invited me and my assistant, Milton Seldin, to meet her in their little apartment on the outskirts of Tel Aviv.

Seated in their modest living room, her feet propped up on a hassock, Hansi told us of the torture she had suffered after her arrest which had marked her for life. She had been operating a clandestine printing press and the Nazis beat the soles of her feet with whips to try to force her to reveal the location of the press and the names of her associates. But she never faltered, and in the months during which she had no word from Joel, a fact which had caused some suspicion among their comrades in the underground, she never wavered in her faith that if he didn't write, he was being held against his will. Her conviction, based on faith, was accurate, as was her unshaken belief that some day they would be together again, as indeed they are in Israel.

I asked Hansi if she knew of any baptisms or certificates issued by the Catholic Church to Jews in Budapest. She smiled and casually told us that her press had turned out many facsimiles of original certificates and that these had served to save many lives. But most of the certificates used were originals and upon further investigation I found many Israeli citizens who had escaped the Hungarian death trap by the use of the little pieces of paper stamped with the seal of the Catholic Church.

Try as I may, I have not been able to ascertain exactly

how many Hungarian Jews were saved or had their lives made easier with these baptismal certificates. They must number in the thousands. And all this was due to the kindly intervention of the benevolent Apostolic Delegate to the Middle East. Is it any wonder that I was moved to tears when in 1958 I read the headlines which announced to the world that Angelo Roncalli had been elected Pope, the ruler of the Catholic Church?

No other personality I met during those troubled times in Turkey had more sharply etched himself into my memory. Reading the news of his ascendance to the throne in the Vatican, I was reminded of our meeting on the little island in the Marmora Sea and I recalled his warmth, dynamism and sympathy. I knew then that this would be a man of the people, a warm, sympathetic spiritual leader who would not permit the barriers of officialdom to come between him and his humane concern for all the people and the peace. We could rest assured that Angelo Roncalli, Pope John XXIII, would be a positive force for humanity.

Chapter XIV

By November, 1944, I was ready to go home.

Although isolated in Turkey, we received daily dispatches which indicated that the end of the war in Europe could not be far off. In addition, we had our own barometers. Even the waiters at the Hotel Park Palas, adjacent to the German Consulate in Istanbul, had become courteous to Americans and representatives of our Allies. In earlier times these lackeys of the Nazis had not only given us poor service, but they had worked overtime at eavesdropping and spying on us for their German masters.

My personal mission in the Balkans had for the time being been accomplished. The Russians had already moved into Rumania and Bulgaria, and surrender was but a few weeks away in Hungary. I recommended that Herbert Katzki, my capable assistant, assume the task of cleaning up the Board's remaining business, and left for Washington.

On my arrival, Secretaries Morgenthau and Hull called a meeting of the principals of the Middle East desk to hear my report. This I augmented with my resignation. But I had almost as much trouble being demobilized as any GI under

the Army point system. John H. Pehle, Director of the War Refugee Board, had been assigned to a new post by his chief, Secretary of the Treasury Morgenthau, and I was questioned about filling the vacancy.

I pleaded illness, for I was wracked by malaria I had picked up in Turkey and was close to collapse from sheer fatigue. They accepted my resignation with a strong letter of appreciation, but only on condition that I would be on call for consultation in Washington.

After an absence of ten months, I returned to my desk at Bloomingdale's and found a strange world in which I no longer fitted psychologically or practically. The ten months might as well have been a century. Not only had there been many changes in personnel and policies but I found myself disinterested. Against the background of trading with the enemy, selling goods had lost its fascination. It wasn't too long before I resigned from my position.

Almost imperceptibly, a door had closed on my former life during my absence. And the period of transition was made even more critical by my continued poor health.

Despite this condition, I was actually quite active in business. As a consultant to the Federated Department Stores and other business firms, I probably earned more money those days than at any other time in my life. One of my efforts, an elaboration of my modern design competition at Bloomingdale's, made merchandising history. Aiming directly at "overstuffed furniture at overstuffed prices," I again arranged for the collaboration of the Museum of Modern Art, this time with a nationwide group of low-cost furniture stores, spear-headed by Sachs Quality Stores. As a result, for the first time, good modern design to fit the new architecture was made available to people who previously could

afford only the gimcrackery of the so-called "borax" manufacturers.

Despite my relative prosperity, my spirits remained at a low ebb. The energy and optimism needed to set new foundations and seek new vistas seemed more than I could summon up from a depleted reservoir.

Hortense's entire life centered on her music and her responsibility as a great artist. Not only did she regard my many trips abroad as desertion of her career, but her complete preoccupation with concert preparations and recording sessions left little or no time for the amenities of married life.

However, my deep interest in Hortense's musical career continued until her untimely death some years later. She was a woman of completely incorruptible and uncompromising musical ideals. Unfortunately, she was compulsively overzealous in her attempts to reach perfection, a quality she carried over from her music into her daily life. Her concern with the possibility of failure bore no relationship to her great gifts. Schnabel, an incorrigible punster and epigrammatist, once affectionately referred to her as the "Happy Worrier."

With all of our problems and the differences they generated, I owe much to her: the early days of our companionship, especially in Europe; her pure standards of music, which reinforced my own; her introducing me to the Schnabels and her indispensable collaboration in the artistic field for the New Friends of Music.

On my return to America in 1944, I was to find it difficult to reset my roots. I can still recall my desolation. One evening, in the loneliness that had gripped me, my eyes centered on the piano in a corner of the room. At that moment I decided

that this would be the means which could revive my former joy of living. I turned to the healing balm of music. In the years of my marriage, Hortense had occupied the musical throne in our house. Preoccupied with furthering her career and directing the concerts of the New Friends of Music, I had dropped my own piano studies. Now, at a moment when my strength and spirits seemed spent, I wrote to my friend Artur Schnabel and asked him to recommend a piano teacher for me. I had decided to pour myself into the study of some Beethoven sonatas.

Schnabel immediately replied with a letter which was an inspirational lifeline. "Don't ever worry about yourself," he said. "In your momentary descent, you have turned to the highest mountain—to your music, and the ascent will make you free. May I have the privilege of being your teacher?"

And thus, with the incomparable musical and spiritual guidance of the great man and his son, Karl Ulrich Schnabel, I began the slow climb up a new road. In addition to my music, I gained strength from activities more closely linked with my recent assignment in Turkey. Rather than put this behind me, I recounted my experiences in the Middle East in a book, *Lifeline to a Promised Land,* which was published in 1946.

The book and a degree of public recognition I had received for my work attracted the attention of certain lecture bureaus as well as organizations with special interest in the area. They wanted to hear from me on the collisive problems in the explosive Middle East at the crossroads between East and West; the inevitable revolution in Egypt; the ferment in Palestine, soon to become Israel, and the unsound foundation of the Turkish Republic—as I had witnessed them. I spoke before a seemingly endless variety of

interested groups along the Eastern Seaboard, ranging from the Foreign Policy Association to women's clubs, sometimes small but so enthusiastic. My most critical audience was at Columbia University where, during the inevitable questions period, I suffered the heckling of a group of Arab sympathizers.

Chapter XV

Fitting logically into this new pattern of activity was the FM Station, W75NY, and the experimental television station, W2XMT, atop the Hotel Pierre. Here, at least, I could pick up where I had left off at WOR and merge the disciplines of business with my first love—music. In fact, it was a source of great pride to me that the Sunday afternoon broadcast concerts of the New Friends of Music which I had inaugurated had been continued throughout the war, a peaceful haven for thousands of war-weary New Yorkers as well as servicemen stationed in the metropolitan area.

The Office of War Information also used the concerts for short wave transmission to our troops and civilian audiences abroad.

With a vision before me of enhanced post-war interest in public information and high-quality musical fare, I had purchased the two stations W75NY and W2XMT from Bloomingdale's and Abraham and Straus. For the first time in my life, I became the head of my own business.

Without the understanding and financial aid of one man—Harry Scherman—I would not have been able to take this

step. My friendship with him, born of our mutual love of music, is one of my most prized assets. A pioneer subscriber to the New Friends concerts, Scherman's Book-of-the-Month Club had sponsored the weekly concerts on WQXR, the radio station of *The New York Times*. With typical good taste, the Club's participation consisted of an intermission discussion of books by Henry Seidel Canby, and no commercial announcements.

One other member of the board of directors of the newly organized company deserves special mention. He was my good friend Fiorello La Guardia. Having refused to run for a fourth term as mayor of New York City, La Guardia was in a sorely needed period of rest from his busy career as a public servant. With the same enthusiasm that characterized his approach to any undertaking, La Guardia was bristling with program ideas, innovations for my FM station, now redesignated WABF.

But rest and quiet were not long for La Guardia. In March, 1946, he was summoned to perform his last great public service, a task he undertook in behalf of the hungry and homeless of the tortured world. President Truman and his new Secretary of State, James F. Byrnes, called on La Guardia's great experience as an administrator to assume the Director Generalship of the United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration, a post left vacant by the resignation of Herbert Lehman.

UNRRA was one of the first arms of the United Nations. A magnificent conception of Franklin D. Roosevelt and one of his lasting heritages, in that hectic early postwar period it had fallen on evil days. Bitterly resented from the beginning by the military in Great Britain and the United States, as well as our professional foreign service people, it

was considered a weakening of their position, a usurpation of their prerogatives. The original plans for UNRRA to work independently in Germany had as a result been altered to make it obligatory for supplies to be requisitioned from the Army. The resulting snafu as well as the effort by some of our UNRRA "partners" to exploit desperate shortages in war-devastated Europe to command high prices for their available foodstuffs had caused a scandalous situation. People were actually starving while surplus food was piling up in near-by lands. In addition there were any number of problems involving personnel, policies and unfortunately, politics, which were threatening the existence of what should have been the greatest effort in history to ameliorate man's everlasting inhumanity to man.

My introduction to UNRRA was typical. My phone rang and when I picked up the receiver I was greeted with that inimitable nasal voice so well known and beloved by all New Yorkers. Without any preamble La Guardia asked: "Ira, how would you like to go to China?"

My office was filled with lawyers at the time, all busy completing the final transfer of title to me of the FM and television stations. Overhearing Fiorello's words, Morris Ernst, my attorney, quickly broke in, "What a helluva time for you to go off to the Orient." I was not sure what La Guardia was driving at, but I agreed to meet with him that evening at his home in Riverdale.

La Guardia hadn't officially accepted the UNRRA appointment, but it was clear that he was looking only for some support to say "Yes." After forty years in public life, twelve of them as mayor and twenty in Congress, he had resolved to sit back and enjoy his family, but the challenge and the

possibilities of international lifesaving infected the two of us. We spent the evening throwing ideas back and forth.

"What we need are rescue squads," I emphasized. "Not committees." During my stay in Turkey we had broken the rules, ignored red tape and saved lives, I told him. When I quoted my favorite slogan, Fiorello's face lit up, his eyes gleaming.

"That's it," he fairly shouted. "That will be our slogan, 'We save them first and argue after.'

"Ira," he said, "if necessary, would you go to Germany and make a study of the DP camps for me?"

"Of course," I answered.

Before I left for my home that evening, La Guardia told me to hold myself in readiness, but it wasn't until May 17 that I left on my first mission for UNRRA.

In the intervening weeks we had many meetings in which I learned the vexing and complicated problems Fiorello had inherited. I learned, for instance, that since November, 1943, when the forty-four nations then comprising the United Nations had agreed to contribute 1 per cent of their national income, many of them had yet to give one penny. When one considers the fact that our share, $1,350,000,000, represented 72 per cent of the total and that Great Britain with her $332,400,000 another 17 per cent, the failure of certain of the smaller nations which had not been hit by war was particularly shameful.

In addition, La Guardia had been receiving private reports of improper treatment of the DP's in Germany and Austria. There were also tales of acts which smelled of corruption. He was resolved to clean up the mess.

Among other things we discussed was President Truman's request that Great Britain permit the entry of 100,000 Jew-

ish DP's into Palestine. I suggested that UNRRA make this a stronger possibility by arranging for their transport and providing food and shelter for the first six months in their new home. La Guardia quickly estimated that this project would cost approximately a hundred million dollars, but nevertheless told me, "Go ahead. Work out your plan. Let me know how it shapes up. But don't count on it too heavily. The British haven't accepted the report of the Anglo-American Committee of Inquiry yet and I'm not sure they'll even let you into Palestine. But it's worth a try."

Finally, in May, I was officially appointed as Special Inspector General of UNRRA. I was first to head a mission to Turkey; this was to be followed by a visit to Egypt and eventually to Germany to investigate conditions in the Displaced Persons Camps under the administration of Lieutenant General Sir Frederick Morgan of His Majesty's Forces of Great Britain. The night before I left, La Guardia gave me a firsthand "directive" in how to act in tight situations. In the middle of a spaghetti dinner in Washington, he confided to me his strong suspicion that boatloads of food and clothes shipped to China for the relief of the starving and homeless people were being used for personal profits. I asked if the boats were still continuing. Like a shot, he grabbed a phone, called UNRRA Headquarters, and demanded an immediate report on boats in transit at that moment, including the longitude and latitude of their position.

When he learned that two boats heavily loaded with food were nearing the China shores, he barked, "Cable them to turn the ships around. They are not to move east one more goddam inch. Reroute them to Italy and Yugoslavia and stop every new shipload to China."

"That's that," he snapped with a sweeping gesture as if he had thus disposed of a chore. If I needed strength in my resolve to take firm, bold action on my forthcoming mission, it was certainly supplied in person by the Boss.

Next day, La Guardia and his wife came down to the airport to see me off. As I prepared to climb into my plane, he waved his big hat and chirped, "Say good-by to him, Marie. You may never see him again. If the British don't get him, the Arabs will."

Among the many broken appointments I left behind me in New York, was a music lesson scheduled with the elder Schnabel. This was to be one of those rugged two-hour sessions which always terrified me, so, almost like a schoolboy with a note excusing him from class, I phoned Schnabel and announced that I would have to cancel the lesson since I was departing for London, Cairo and other distant places for UNRRA.

Obviously unimpressed, Schnabel asked, "When will you be in London?"

"Next Thursday," I told him, "for a few days."

"Fine," shot back Schnabel. "I'll be there for a concert with the London Philharmonic. You'll take the lesson at my studio in the Hyde Park Hotel Friday at five."

His tone left no room for equivocation: I mumbled my assent. To a Schnabel, a trip across the Atlantic was no excuse for missing a music lesson.

On the Friday in question, I was deeply immersed in the second full-day session at UNRRA's headquarters on Portland Place directly opposite the bombed-out studios of the BBC. My associates on the mission from Canada, France and

England and I were gathering statistical proof of the financial ability of the Turkish and Egyptian Governments to make good on their sorely delinquent contributions to UNRRA.

At 4 P.M., I calmly announced to the chairman that I would have to leave. Even now I smile when I think of the expressions on all their faces when, in answer to the chairman's query as to my reason, I said, "I have to take a music lesson."

Of course I added the details and when I mentioned that my teacher was Schnabel, the meeting almost broke up. This was to be his first appearance in London since before the war. He was to play three Beethoven concertos and tickets were scarce, in fact impossible to buy at any price.

Characteristically, it was a secretary who had the temerity to suggest what was on the minds of all the people in the room. She asked if I might ask "my friend in court" to help get them into the concert. With no great enthusiasm, I promised I would try.

Promptly at five I made my appearance in Schnabel's suite. The Bechstein grand was there, almost staring at me like a threatening monster. But once we passed the amenities and were immersed in the lesson, it was sheer inspiration.

Before leaving, I casually mentioned the meeting I had left and discreetly asked about tickets. "By all means," was Schnabel's typically positive and forthright reply. "They are all invited as guests in my box. And they would honor me greatly by coming to the reception after the concert. Lady Meyer is giving it."

It was a great evening which everyone enjoyed, but no

one more than Schnabel. And on this harmonious note, the mission took off for the Middle East.

After a brief stopover in Cairo, we headed for Turkey, my third visit to a country which had actually prospered from World War II by doing business with both sides, and had yet to contribute its first dollar to UNRRA. According to the agreed-upon formula, its contribution was to have been twelve million Turkish pounds, roughly $6,500,000.

On my arrival I immediately looked for signs of prosperity, but none of the accumulated wealth had reached the people, even indirectly. It was clear to me that if the country were ever to achieve its well-advertised democratic aims, it would have to go through an agonizing purge to rid itself of the corrupt vestiges of the old Ottoman Empire.

Our first official contact was with the Foreign Minister, Hasan Saka, who pleaded poverty, said that nobody had ever been able to estimate the Turkish national income and offered us six million pounds, half of what they owed. When we weren't able to get a better offer from Sukru Saracoglu, the Prime Minister, I coolly announced that I would leave the country in three days, and at that time I would inform the UNRRA Council that Turkey had reneged.

Saracoglu exploded, screaming that I had "insulted the Turkish Government." As I prepared to leave his office, however, he hinted that certain foodstuffs might be made available in lieu of money. I smiled at his first ridiculous offer of dried figs and told him that we might consider acceptance of cereals if their value was estimated at a fair rate.

A deal was finally consummated under the benign influence of good music and excellent Turkish vodka. The members of the string quartet I had organized during my

previous mission to Turkey had asked to play for me. I took advantage of their offer, to give a farewell party. Immediately following the conclusion of the concert, with the strains of the Beethoven *Opus 59 No. 2 String Quartet* still resounding in the big reception room at the Ankara Palas Hotel, representatives of the Turkish Government gathered informally with members of our Mission, and in this circle in a few minutes a formula was agreed upon. Turkey would meet the full amount of its pledge in cereals and other basic foodstuffs to be shipped immediately to the hungry people of Europe. It was an encouraging beginning.

Egypt, too, with a commitment for four million dollars, ninety per cent of it in commodities, had not made any share of its contribution. We met with less success there during our brief stay and left with the matter in abeyance.

I was able, however, to see enough of conditions there to sense that a radical change in their government was inevitable. No regime could stand up under the corruption of King Farouk and his castle clique. Nor could the grinding poverty and abject misery of the Egyptian masses remain forever unremedied. Even a passing glimpse of the decadent feudalism of their landowners was enough to arouse disgust. They were oblivious to the disease and ignorance of their *fellaheen,* one out of ten blind from trachoma, eight out of ten unable to read and write.

I did manage to spend some time at two deserted UNRRA camps, Moses Wells and El Shatt, where earlier in the war Yugoslav and Greek refugees had been housed. I worked out terms for a deal in which the enormous quantities of tents, kitchenware and bedding, now unused, were to be put aside for purchase and removal to Palestine to accommodate the 100,000 Jewish DP's I hoped to see enter the country.

To make preliminary arrangements for the handling of this equipment in Palestine, I went to Jerusalem to see Eliezar Kaplan, treasurer of the Jewish Agency. While there, I earned La Guardia's criticism for speaking too frankly in an interview I gave to a *New York Times* reporter. Secretary of State Byrnes had just made a speech in Stuttgart which seemed to me to imply protection of the postwar position of the defeated Germans. My reaction, which was published, reflected my disagreement. The sharpness of a terse cable from La Guardia was unmistakable. It read: "I will take care of Director General's job of UNRRA, Secretary Byrnes will ably handle the job of Secretary of State and you will follow my directive as personal representative of the Director General." The temptation to reply to Fiorello in kind was too good to miss and I shot back "Instructions received Stop Who is fiddling while Byrnes roams."

The other members of my mission moved on to Iran and I left for Germany. The first task awaiting me was to see General Morgan. I had promised to make a full report on his stewardship as UNRRA Director of Displaced Persons Operations in Germany.

This gentleman, a K.C.B. and a famous British war hero, had made world-wide headlines five months before when he told reporters that the thousands of Jews streaming out of Czechoslovakia and Poland were not fleeing anti-Semitism, but were a part of a "well-organized plan to get out of Europe." He implied, further, that a secret Jewish organization was behind it, that Palestine was somehow involved, and described the panic-stricken, pauperized refugees as "well dressed, well fed and with rosy cheeks." His comments aroused a storm of public protest and it was only considerable pressure from the British military that forced Herbert

Lehman, then the head of UNRRA, to retain him at his post. Of course, Morgan claimed that he was misquoted.

There remained, nevertheless, grave doubts about the fitness of this erstwhile heroic figure to provide the sympathetic leadership required for this most sensitive postwar undertaking. La Guardia had given me a letter to Morgan which stated frankly that my job was to investigate his operation.

I was met at the Frankfurt Airport by Morgan and his deputy, U.S. Major General Philip E. Brown, and British Captain Robert Jenkins, Morgan's adjutant. Morgan, a tall, handsome, prematurely gray-haired man, looked younger than his fifty years. They bundled me into a huge Packard and we sped through the rubble and debris of the city before hitting the Autobahn, which cut a straight line through the rolling, fertile countryside. It was a three and a half hour drive to headquarters in a magnificent castle in Arolsen, set in the heart of the land of Hesse.

Treated in a manner befitting our ducal setting, I was ushered to a regal suite where I was waited on by two valets. After bathing and changing into fresh clothes, I descended a circular staircase that took me to a huge reception hall where Morgan introduced me to a dozen or so of his deputies gathered to meet me. Having supplied the two of us with cocktails, he led me to a quiet corner for a chat. I found myself close to succumbing to his charm, a condition I quickly remedied by presenting my credentials, the astringently written letter from La Guardia which, among other things, referred to the "rumors" and "gossip" concerning the DP camps.

The dinner that followed was letter-perfect in its quality and service. An honored guest was Duncan Sandys, Church-

ill's son-in-law, now Secretary of State for Commonwealth Relations. The sparkling wine, the glittering conversation all added to the sense of unreality that pervaded the castle.

Here in this charming medieval village in central Germany was the headquarters of UNRRA from which came all the directives and orders controlling a network of camps where were housed the meager thousands who had escaped Hitler's mass murderers. Endless reports flowed back and forth. But nowhere was there any contact on a human level. It was as if these people who were our charges were merely pawns on a huge chessboard. I had to go out into the field to see for myself.

I was given aides, secretaries, a luxurious chauffeur-driven car, a phalanx of photographers and all the paraphernalia necessary for my tour of inspection. I visited most of the DP camps from the border of Austria to the northern limits of Germany, and I soon learned that the Jewish population which had survived Hitler were now the victims of a second oppression.

At Zeilsheim, only a half-hour's drive from Frankfurt, I found more than 3,000 Jewish DP's living in misery in nondescript huts and barracks where the Germans had housed Russian slave laborers. Normal housing there meant four families crowded into one room barely 12 by 18 feet.

In the twelfth-century monastery at Kloster Indersdorf, near Munich, 300 orphaned children, mostly Jewish, were under the care of a handful of Catholic nuns. They had practically no medical supplies; they were short in dressings, sulfa drugs, even vaseline—in fact, everything needed for the care of children. At the time of my visit, they hadn't seen a doctor for twenty-four days.

I was forced to describe Funk Caserne, formerly a Luft-

waffe base near Dachau, not as a camp but a "crime." There, in a three-story concrete garage which the Germans had used for storing coal and lumber, 1,800 men and women had been herded like cattle. They lived, slept and ate in double-decked bunks that took up all the available space. There were three toilets for the 1,800.

Then there was Fahrenwald, where more than 4,000 Jewish DP's suffered and where they had actually summoned up sufficient strength to riot against their lot; and Landsberg, in the British Zone, where 5,000 Jews were crammed into space where 2,500 German soldiers had been billeted. There were others, too many to list.

All that I had seen was a flagrant violation of the humane directive issued by General Eisenhower before he left Germany. He had specifically ordered "that the victims of Nazism should be the first to be rescued and resuscitated . . . and that the burden of providing a means for caring for these people must to the greatest extent possible be thrown upon the German population." The very opposite was happening. In fact, in the camps that I visited which housed non-Jewish DP's, mostly Poles and refugees from the Baltic nations, their care was immeasurably better than in the Jewish camps.

I felt the need to act, and took full advantage of my authority as "Personal Representative of the Director General" to take strong measures wherever and whenever I thought they were warranted. I commandeered trucks and went into German villages where I sequestered clothing and shoes for the children. I took over a pharmacy and stripped it to supply an infirmary at one of the camps. And then I set about firing generals.

Through some strange coincidence, perhaps it was planned, in many camps the British brigadier general in charge had

as his deputy a young Jewish aide. Most of these deputies were social workers and many of them were members of that strange ubiquitous breed—they came from Brooklyn. Since most of them were working against tremendous odds and against the resistance of their superiors, and lacked sufficient authority, I remedied that situation simply by relieving the generals and putting their deputies in charge.

There was no way of knowing how long these new set-ups would last. I knew full well that my actions would be protested and I wasn't a bit surprised when I received a strong telegram from La Guardia. He said that Secretary of State Byrnes had received a vigorous complaint from the British Foreign Office that I was relieving British generals from their posts arbitrarily and without cause. I was asked to justify my actions, which I did promptly, citing in detail my reasons, listing names, places and the nature of the malfeasance in each camp. The reply from La Guardia came in a short wire which I still treasure. It read:

STOP FIRING THOSE BRITISH GENERALS. SAVE SOME FOR ME.

LA GUARDIA.

En route from camp to camp, I busied myself dictating my findings. I placed on record a complete dossier including what I had found in each camp with names, dates, statistics on hospitalized children without food, medicine and clothing, and the utter lack of supervision by the British camp directors. Before returning to Arolsen, I stopped in Berlin where I presented these facts to our Ambassador Robert Murphy and to General Lucius Clay, the Deputy Military Governor at the time. These two top Americans in Germany, repre-

senting their respective divisions of our government, were not speaking to each other at the moment, so I had to have separate interviews.

Murphy listened sympathetically to my report, but General Clay's reaction was something else. He set the stage for our talks by brusquely informing me that he had set aside twenty minutes for me—a friendly gambit. When I complained that our army had failed completely to implement the Eisenhower directive for the treatment of the Jewish minority, he brushed aside my remarks. I persisted, however, stating that I had seen these violations with my own eyes, some of them just a few hours earlier.

"I have eyes, too," was Clay's curt reply.

When I countered by asking when he had last seen the camps, the General snapped that he was not to be questioned by me. Finally he leaned over his large desk and asked, "Just what do you want, Mr. Hirschmann?"

"Aspirin," I answered.

"Aspirin," repeated Clay, his hawklike eyes fairly popping out of his head. "You came to this office for aspirin?"

In counterpoint to his rising fury, I lowered my voice, saying, "I have been trying to get aspirin for the surviving Jews of Germany up and down the country. And, since I have not been able to find any, I decided to make this my last stop."

This bland statement and the way in which I made it seemed to infuriate General Clay even more, and our voices rose to a higher pitch of acrimony. My final remark was that I was sure that the General would not mind my broadcasting on a national network in the United States that our army, after eighteen months, still could not provide aspirin for children in our charge, and that I had proof that there was

plenty of aspirin as well as all other essential medicines available in good supply for the so-called defeated Germans.

I knew this was a form of blackmail, but I was left with no alternative. Clay softened. I was promised aspirin and the other requisites for the DP's. I have been told, however, that General Clay never forgave me for my defiance in his own bailiwick.

From there I returned directly to Arolsen to arrange an itinerary for La Guardia's follow-up tour of inspection. He had expressed his eagerness to visit the camps himself. Fiorello did not want to be denied a hand in the necessary clean-up.

Before leaving for the States, I went over my findings with General Morgan and I pulled no punches. He defended his subordinates and, in fact, refused to follow my suggestion for the removal of Jack Whiting, the UNRRA Director for the U.S. Zone, in my estimation grossly unfit for his responsibility. Even with the concrete evidence I had brought back with me I did not press it further, nor did I discuss the wider implications of what I had seen and the conclusions I had reached. It would have been a waste of time.

One of the principal recommendations of "The Bad Neighbor Policy," the report I filed with La Guardia on my return, was that General Morgan and his entire entourage be removed. It was to be a clean excision, like the removal of a malignant growth, if the victims of Nazism were not to suffer "a second death."

On his trip to the camps, a month later, La Guardia followed my recommendation: Morgan was relieved. I was asked if I would take the job and when I demurred, Myer Cohen, the former Assistant Regional Director of the Farm Security Administration who had accomplished wonders for

the Okies during their sad days, was named as Acting Chief of the DP operations in Germany.

Hardly had I finished my report, and while the enormity of all that I had witnessed was still an open wound, when I began work on another book. It was to be no mere listing of the horrors of DP life nor did I intend only to inveigh against the official callousness and disinterest which had so infuriated me. I was more concerned with the apparent coddling of the Germans at the expense of the DP's. After two world wars resulting directly from German aggressions, I could see no justification for treating war criminals like "teachers' pets." My book, *The Embers Still Burn,* came out a year later.

I met La Guardia at the airport on his return from his arduous two-months' tour of inspection which had covered all the area I had seen, as well as the Eastern countries, including the Soviet Union. I was shocked by the change in him in such a short period. His eyes had lost their luster and were heavily ringed; his skin was drawn and colorless; for the first time the spring in his step, the bounce that marked La Guardia, was gone. It was a heartbreaking sight.

He spent the last months of his life fighting for the continuation of aid for displaced persons and sent me on a second mission which included Poland, Czechoslovakia, Austria and Italy. He carried his fight to Washington and to Lake Success, the temporary home of the United Nations, and he lived just long enough to see the beginning of the dismantling of UNRRA, whose functions were to be taken over by a new group, the International Refugee Organization.

Two days before he died, in September, 1947, Fiorello called me to his sickbed: his life was ebbing away. His final

words to me were not concerned with international problems, nor did they deal with the refugees we had fought for together. Rather, his legacy to me involved someone dear to him. I was deeply moved when, quietly, weakly, he said to me: "Ira, either you or Newbold Morris must take care of Juanita. Let her decide. But promise me."

As I uttered my assurance, he turned his head away, and as he did, I knew that some part of my own life was going with him. A warm friendship, a zestful outlook, courage, adventure and concern for humanity remain an undying inheritance.

Chapter XVI

To a casual observer there would seem to be no discernible connection between the writing of advertising copy and a career in the Department of State. There is a common ground, however, in that an ability to communicate cogently and succinctly is an indispensable tool in either instance.

To understand this fully, one should know how the State Department is organized. From the very nature of its function, many of its representatives are scattered throughout the world. Since personal contact is impractical and often impossible, the thousands of messages that flow between Washington and our diplomatic outposts through the desk which controls the activities of each specific area are often the measure of a man's effectiveness. Many a foreign officer's career has been blighted by his inability to write good telegrams—unambiguous and compelling. To possess this aptitude is also an invaluable asset to a man in the field. It is said, for instance, that Winston Churchill's telegrams when he was in the British Foreign Office were masterpieces of the genre, distinguished for his use of colorful language, brief and telling.

Starting with my very first report from Turkey, I rejected the dry language of traditional diplomatic exchange, the rigid, humorless Federalese that has grown barnacle-like in government service. I spent hours writing and editing my messages, employing unorthodox language and even discreet humor. This was not done merely out of a love of language, however, but to rivet attention to my need for quick decisions in an agency of the State Department outside the mainstream of its principal activities. I was aware that I was in constant competition with priorities assigned to agencies more directly involved with the prosecution of the war.

On my first return from Ankara to Washington "for consultation" I was gratified to learn that my efforts were appreciated by, among others, George V. Allen, Assistant Secretary of State in charge of the Middle East desk. He was on the receiving end of my telegrams. A career officer with many years of service in the area, he was intimately familiar with the undercurrents of Middle East politics. At the time of my assignment he had only recently returned from Cairo, where he had been responsible for co-ordinating the historic meeting of President Roosevelt and Winston Churchill.

Allen, who had briefed me before I left on my first trip to Turkey, had been frank in expressing little optimism for the success of my mission. On my return he told me quite candidly that he, along with most of his associates in the department, had written off my work as expendable and that he would have given odds against any favorable results. He hastened to add that this was not to be considered a reflection on my ability, but was based on his appraisal of the situation in enemy territory. He had kept close tabs on me, he told me, attracted by my daily telegrams, and when they began to reflect our growing success in prying open a door

to the Balkans, he celebrated with me. This warm assessment of my efforts affected me deeply. My friendship with George Allen became a lasting thing—a relationship which was to open new and important avenues for my future work in diplomacy.

At the end of the war Allen was sent to Teheran as ambassador. An isolated post, it soon became the focus of world attention. For, only weeks after the cessation of World War II, Iran was to be the testing ground of the United Nations. It seemed that little Iran was threatening the security of the Soviet Union, and the Russians felt it necessary to continue their wartime occupation of Azerbaijan, the country's northern province. The fact that this area is rich in oil was only incidental. At the UN Security Council, then meeting in its temporary headquarters at Hunter College in New York, the atmosphere was tense, with all the member nations, excluding Russia's satellites, united against the Soviet Union. Suddenly the Iranian Ambassador rose and announced that he had been informed by his government that the Russians had begun to withdraw their troops. George Allen is generally credited with having persuaded the Russian diplomats in Iran to urge Stalin to give up Azerbaijan, a diplomatic triumph for the West.

In June, 1949, while the world was still puzzling over the ouster from the Comintern of Marshal Tito, the Yugoslav dictator, Allen was transferred to Belgrade. Our former Ambassador, Cavendish Cannon, had been declared *persona non grata* a few months earlier, a victim of Marshal Tito's feud with the Catholic Church that had resulted in the imprisonment of Cardinal Stepinac in Zagreb. Cannon was a Catholic.

Before going to Yugoslavia, Allen needed some months to clear up unfinished affairs in Iran; a vacuum was created in

a sensitive key post at a crucial turn in history. It was too soon to know whether Tito was sincere in his break with Stalin; it might have been a political ruse. The United States had adopted a wait and see policy, but it was certainly no time for us not to be represented in Belgrade.

By a combination of fortuitous circumstances I was able to serve Ambassador Allen and our government in an unofficial but critical role in Yugoslavia during this interim period. Earlier in the year, I had been honored by being selected as the recipient of the One World Award, a distinction previously bestowed upon Fiorello La Guardia and Arturo Toscanini. In addition to the trappings of a testimonial dinner, I was offered a trip around the world. Since I was deep in the throes of what seemed to be a losing battle to combine good music and good business at my FM station, WABF, I didn't feel that this was the time to go off for three months. Some of this free transportation was to serve an extremely useful purpose.

However, at the time of Allen's new assignment, the government of Yugoslavia had embarked on a world-wide public relations program. They seemed intent on proving to the world, principally the United States, that their policies were not to be confused with Stalin's. When a group of opinion-makers was invited to visit the country, and I was included, I immediately called George Allen, who was still in Washington. He suggested that I exploit this hospitality and the transportation available to me to make a diplomatic scouting trip in Yugoslavia for him. I was to make a quiet investigation of the facts of Tito's break with Stalin and to submit a confidential report to Allen and Secretary of State Dean Acheson.

It was a challenging assignment, and I approached it with avid, built-up excitement. Tito was an enigma causing con-

cern as well as puzzlement in the Western world. Had he really defied Stalin and been forced out of the Comintern? Or had Stalin cast him out of his satellite society as a preamble to further action? Worse still, was this a gigantic hoax engineered by the two Communist leaders to lure Western innocents into a trap? I made arrangements to leave immediately.

En route to Yugoslavia I stopped in Paris in quest of advance information. I called on the Yugoslav Ambassador, Marco Ristic, a talented poet, and lunched informally with him and his stunning wife. To seal our new friendship, we exchanged books after lunch. I gave him a copy of *The Embers Still Burn* and was handed a beautifully bound volume of his poems—in French. Still seeking information, I shared a huge meal with my old friend, Jo Davidson, the sculptor, and his wife, Florence. Jo had spent some months in Yugoslavia modeling a head of Tito, and I thought he might have some inside tips on the man and his entourage. My visit to Paris was pleasant but unproductive.

The old Orient Express, the setting for so many adventure novels, took me from Paris to Belgrade via Trieste and Sarajevo. I arrived on Armistice Day and found our embassy closed, but the Charge d'Affaires, Robert Borden Reams, rushed down to my hotel from his house to greet me.

Reams, one of the most highly regarded of the younger men in the State Department, had already earned a reputation for political astuteness. He was slated for bigger things.

We met in the lobby and talked in whispers, routine procedure in police states. As an assistant to former Secretary of State Byrnes, Reams had read my telegrams and reports from Turkey and had found them "concrete and refreshing." Reams told me that Allen had paved the way for my arrival

and that I was to report my activities to him at the embassy. This was the birth of a warm friendship and diplomatic association to be carried on in hot spots in other sections of the world.

The Yugoslav Government had offered me a guide and an interpreter with complete freedom to visit any part of the country. But I took advantage of the graciously offered services of Reams's wife, Dotty, an American girl of Yugoslav extraction with relatives and friends in the country. Her guidance gave me an inside track.

We visited farms where we were received with what I soon learned was typical Yugoslav hospitality. It gave me an excellent opportunity to see the collective farms close up. Theoretically a sound idea, in practice, I found, collectivism was not working. An entire village turned out to greet the return of a local son who had been jailed for non-co-operation with the collectives. He was welcomed as a returning hero.

I couldn't have come to the country at a better time of the year. It was the *vinogradov,* the wine harvest, and wherever we went there were brimming glasses of the newly made wine. On one of the farms, after some jovial and free sampling of the new wine in large glasses, the farmer took me out in the rear of the barn and secretly showed me where the crops were hidden underground out of sight of government inspectors. The defiance in his eyes stemmed from many generations of individual freedom, traditional with farmers everywhere. He was very proud of the corn which he dug up to show me. It was a superior cross-breed, he told me.

Through Dotty Reams, acting as my interpreter, I told him that I was a friend of Henry Wallace, our former vice-president, and that he was known for the development of hybrid

corn. I was amazed to hear that in this remote area in Yugoslavia, on the border of Bulgaria, this peasant had heard of Wallace and his corn. He insisted that I take some samples of his crop with me to give to Wallace on my return to the States. I did that, carrying his corn in a bag aboard my plane. Wallace, in turn, sent my peasant friend a good supply of seed through the Yugoslav Ambassador to the United States.

In the course of my tour of the country, I had a pleasant chore to perform in Rijeka, formerly Fiume, on the Dalmatian coast. This was the scene of Fiorello La Guardia's first job, a stint in the United States consular service when he was nineteen. In recognition of La Guardia's efforts for Yugoslavia as head of UNRRA, the city was renaming in his honor the street where he had lived in Rijeka. Marie La Guardia had asked me to represent her, and I had been invited to speak at the ceremony which would change the name of Corso Rosso (Red Avenue) to Corso La Guardia.

Several hundred people, mostly workers, had gathered that late October afternoon around the temporary platform facing the modest little house where Fiorello had lived. I was introduced as Mrs. La Guardia's representative and a colleague of the Director General of UNRRA. I had painstakingly prepared a brief statement in Italian which is spoken in that bilingual area. I congratulated the citizens of Rijeka on living in the city which had served as a cradle for a great public career, and ended with a vigorous "Vive La Guardia" which was enthusiastically taken up by the crowd. When I sat down, breathing freely again after my first attempt at public speaking in Italian, I was generously applauded, but to this day I am not sure that this response had to do with what I had said, or with their joy that my speech was ended.

The ceremony over and the crowd dispersed, the Mayor, a man in his twenties with an empty sleeve where he had lost an arm, asked me to meet his wife. But instead of leading me to the small group of local officials who had lingered, we went around the corner to a pile of bricks and cement. A pretty young girl straightened up and, pausing just long enough to wipe her hands on her blue jeans, came over to greet me. This was the Mayor's wife, a volunteer on a road-building job. I wasn't ready to be swung over to the Communist camp, but I must admit that the vitality and spirit of the people of Yugoslavia were impressive.

That evening I had supper with a group of about fifty former Partisans. These young men and women had fought through the war, and many of them bore visible scars. Some were missing limbs. Sitting with them and listening to their stirring Partisan songs, sung with full-throated gusto and passion, was an exciting, unforgettable experience. Soon I found myself singing along with them at the top of my voice, without knowing the words. My esteem for these people soared to new heights. Their persistent, infectious gaiety and the resoluteness of their independent spirit despite their obvious difficulties were a sharp contrast to the grim grayness I had seen in the larger Yugoslav cities.

I returned to Belgrade for a meeting with Marshal Tito. Since this was to be the first contact with the dictator by an American after Ambassador Cannon's unscheduled departure, Bob Reams coached me carefully in preparation.

Tito lived in a section not unlike one of our own suburban communities. After passing through a heavy wooden gate where our party was checked by a solitary guard, we went on to the house. It was surprisingly modest though tastefully furnished. His office, where we were to meet, was a

long rectangular affair, approximately 30-by-70 feet, but it seemed to take me forever to walk the length of the room to the extreme end where Tito, with perhaps a touch of theatricality, was awaiting me, flanked on one side by an interpreter and on the other by an armed soldier.

He turned out to be a smaller man than I had expected. He is as short as La Guardia, and there are other physical resemblances, especially around the waistline. Very quickly, with a reaction which I am sure has been shared by others, I forgot his stature and was conscious only of the power in his craggy, square-jawed face. In more ways than one, Josip Broz, Marshal Tito, is a strong man.

I opened our discussion by saying that a leader who was sensitive enough to appoint a poet as ambassador to France could only win my admiration, and I told him of my visit with Ristic. He was pleased and smiled while he inserted the first of many cigarettes in a delicately engraved pipe-shaped holder. I thanked him for the freedom I had enjoyed during my tour of the countryside and then mentioned the dissatisfaction I had found among the farmers, which I took to be a sign that the collective system was not working. His only comment to this was, "Farmers complain all over the world."

When I persisted, stating that the preponderance of farmers in the Yugoslav population, approximately 75 per cent of the total, didn't augur well for the future of Communism in his country, he recoiled. Yugoslavia was socialist, he said, not Communist, a distinction I did not pursue.

I broached the subject of his break with Stalin and his reaction was explosive. Rising to his feet, his face coloring, he fairly shouted that "Joe" had fired him and that he was proud of it. He had knuckled down long enough, he told me, but the break came when he finally refused to permit the

Russians to remove any of the bauxite, cobalt and other valuable ores from the Montenegrin mountains. I received the impression that Soviet mining experts had discovered these rich deposits in the Yugoslav hills and that they had lost no time in preparing to cart this treasure eastward.

He continued his tirade against his erstwhile comrade "Joe" and climaxed it by thrusting a bundle of letters into the hands of his interpreter to translate their contents. The correspondence between the two dictators left no doubt in my mind about the extent and implacability of Tito's rift with his former friend and teacher, "Joe."

"Only when he apologizes to me will I return to the fold," he said finally, folding his arms in a defiant pose.

Mention of Cardinal Stepinac and the Catholic Church brought forth even stronger fire. Tito's interpreter was hard put to keep up with the speed and vehemence of his harangue. "If I released Stepinac," he fired back, "how would I explain it to the thousands of widows and orphans who are his victims?"

The Church had sided with the monarchist Chetniks, Tito's foes in the internecine warfare that had wracked the war-torn nation internally. It is said that 500,000 Yugoslavs fell at the hands of their countrymen, even more than were victims of the Nazis. It should be recorded, of course, that the Partisans did their share of the killing—enough to win control of the country.

Our talks covered many more subjects. I was interested in how his government had seemingly reunited the divergent peoples who had been joined together to form Yugoslavia after World War I, and who had again been torn apart during the recent war. He replied by saying that he had reorganized the country into six federated republics and that each

republic was being given more and more autonomy since he was a strong believer in decentralization. "Concentrating power in one center breeds bureaucracy," he said, adding, "I hate bureaucracy."

Before we adjourned, Tito returned to his break with Stalin. "It is not illogical that differences should develop between socialist states just as they have between capitalist states," he said. "This had to come. It is just as well that it came to us in Yugoslavia at this time. We are ready for it."

Pointing to a huge painting that covered the entire wall behind his desk and served as a dramatic backdrop for the black bust of Lenin, which on its six-foot pedestal dominated the room, I asked about its origin. It was a vivid picture of hand-to-hand fighting which he explained represented the defense of the Serbian people against Turkish invaders. But it held other significance for him. "Our only quarrel with the Comintern," he said, resuming his argument, "is to insist upon our independence and our right to self-determination. We fought the Turks for six hundred years. Supposing"—this with a shrug of the shoulders—"we have to fight other invaders for six hundred more?"

I closed our meeting by asserting that there is a common bond of humanity between the people of Yugoslavia and the Americans, and that regardless of political belief we should help each other.

My report, which I prepared at the American Embassy in London, reiterated my positive reaction to the people of Yugoslavia. It was my judgment that the break with Stalin was genuine and I recommended that we give aid to Tito's government. I have reason to believe that this influenced our government's decision to gamble on a Communist nation which could stand up to the Soviet Union. At any rate,

George Allen wrote to me from Yugoslavia when he assumed his post as ambassador that my report had been of invaluable help to him.

Two years later the Yugoslavs, still determined to prove their independence of the Comintern, invited people from all over the world to attend a peace meeting in Zagreb. In effect, it was in competition with similar Soviet-inspired gatherings in Stockholm and Vienna. Actually, it was the birth of that peculiar third movement—neutralism.

There were no governments represented officially at the Zagreb Conference in 1951, but with the blessing of Assistant Secretary of State George Perkins, who asked me to report to him, I attended as a private individual. Perkins wanted my appraisal of Yugoslavia's political and economic position after two years of our prodigious grants-in-aid and direct loans. George Allen, who was still Ambassador to Yugoslavia, was of course advised of the nature of my participation and was among many friends who welcomed me on my arrival. Our consul in Zagreb, Charles MacVickers, had been on the political desk in our Turkish Embassy when I was there. We spent some nostalgic hours reviewing the hectic days of the war. It was only a few years away, but it seemed that eons had passed.

The so-called peace conference, as I reported to Assistant Secretary Perkins, was largely a Yugoslav show. They were still pressing to demonstrate to the world that Yugoslavia, while Communist in form, was open for inspection. I was also convinced that for internal consumption and prestige Yugoslavia was anxious to have "big" personalities come to the country.

But most of the big names did not appear. With the exception of Pastor Niemöller, it was not too distinguished a gath-

ering. The leading Americans were Professor Philip Mosely of Columbia University and Dr. Joseph E. Johnson, president of the Carnegie Foundation, the man responsible for Dean Rusk's recruitment from Mills College for the State Department.

I addressed the conference at the same session as Professor Mosely and made an appeal for international co-operation. I urged strong support of the United Nations as "our best, if not last, hope for peace." It was also an opportunity for me to cite President Truman's Point Four Program as a new departure in international co-operation.

For the greatest part, however, Moshe Pjade, Tito's trusted associate, controlled the Resolutions Committee, the key body at this conference. The resolutions which were passed served the purposes of the Yugoslav Government, but as I said, it was their party.

I did have an opportunity to assay the results of two years of independent Titoism with a generous helping hand from Uncle Sam. The score was not too good. Although my feeling for the Yugoslav people was still strongly sympathetic, they had not made any apparent economic progress. The country was not as yet prepared to make use of our aid. There were signs of maladministration on all fronts. Prices had skyrocketed—a man's cotton shirt cost fifty dollars. Unfortunately, while the people were aware of our aid to them, they could not yet feel the effects of our assistance.

As a reflection of my dim view of Yugoslav economic progress I concluded among other things in my report that "American aid, traditional and generous, as reflective of the spirit of the American people, must, with enlightened self-interest, have as its handmaiden a certain reappraised real-

ism and the demand for improved administration that is implemented by our aid."

Reviewing my political findings, I expressed my belief that Tito should be challenged in terms of commitments to us. Referring again to "our self-interest," I suggested in my report that "it may be time for us to have Tito show his hand more conclusively."

Assistant Secretary Perkins, in a comment on my report, agreed with me, stating further, "The job is to know when to pull reins tight and when to loosen them." In the light of the position taken by Marshal Tito at the "neutralist" meeting in Belgrade in October, 1961, I still maintain that a continued scrutiny of our policy of openhanded generosity to Yugoslavia should be made. But I believe firmly that our aid to Yugoslavia has been right for the long pull.

Chapter XVII

During this period when I was living alone, I received an unexpected phone call at my office from Juanita. She was unhappy, she told me, and wanted to see me. As I told her to come over right away, it occurred to me that I had not pursued too assiduously the deathbed promise I had made to Fiorello. But the truth is, I hadn't wanted to exert any influence on Juanita. It was up to her to decide where she should work, in Newbold Morris' home or mine or, for that matter, any place at all.

It didn't take long, once she arrived at my office, for her to get to the point of her visit. In the midst of her telling me how much she missed "the Major," she suddenly leaned over my desk and stared intently at a point somewhere below my chin. "Just look at that shirt," she said.

Somewhat sheepishly I asked, "What's the matter with it?"

Solemnly she rose and walked toward me. She fingered the collar of what I had thought to be a perfectly laundered white shirt, and shaking her head indignantly, declared, "I'd never let the Major go out in shirts washed and ironed like that. Why, it doesn't even have any bluing in it."

I knew my Juanita. I looked at her quizzically for the briefest moment and then reached into my trouser pocket for my apartment keys. I flipped them lightly on the desk in her direction and said, "Take over, Juanita. The job's all yours."

I felt the full strength of her huge smile beaming at me as she rose to go. "Don't forget," I told her, "cocktails for two, tonight."

"Yes," answered that wonderful woman who was to bring order back to my life, "yes, and a little poem to bless the new house."

In the next few months, with Juanita's help as cook and housekeeper, I did a considerable amount of entertaining in my apartment. Then, early in the summer, at a party in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, I met Anne Foss Kyle. It was not our first meeting, for she had been an early subscriber to the New Friends of Music concerts and there was her anonymous picketing outside Carnegie Hall so many years earlier. But under these more felicitous conditions, I was immediately drawn to her.

There is something stately in Anne's handsomeness. She acts and looks every inch the New England aristocrat. If it is possible to assess one's emotional reactions, I would venture that I was attracted to Anne less by her beauty than by her demeanor and the intensity of her feelings for others. For it must be said that Anne suffers painfully with every underdog.

She came by this tendency quite naturally. Her mother, from an old New England family in Boston, has fought many a good fight, almost always as a member of the minority. Today, at eighty, Bertha Foss, slowed up a bit by arthritis, is practically indestructible, her convictions on civil rights as strong as ever.

Anne's father, Ralph Foss, was a vice-president of the McGraw-Hill publishing firm. He was a man of infectious charm and was a vastly popular after-dinner speaker. It was from him that Anne, the apple of his eye, inherited her gracious warmth and affection for people.

Then as now, Anne was incapable of concealing her feelings. One Sunday she sat deep in the rear of Temple Emanu-El on Fifth Avenue while I, as a guest speaker, told the story of my reorganization of the DP camps in Germany as La Guardia's deputy with UNRRA. When she came down the aisle to greet me at the conclusion of my talk, I could see that her eyes were red-rimmed from the tears she had been unable to control when she heard the plight of the thousands of lost children in the Balkans and in Germany. This genuine interest in me and my lifework, and my fascination with her extraordinary talent with people, her charm and lively mind all added to our quickly deepening relationship. We were married on April 2, 1953.

I might add that our marriage had the blessing of Juanita. She was always discreet and never commented on any of my guests or other friends. But one day after meeting Anne, who was helping me with the decor of my apartment, she solemnly voiced her judgment. "That's the only woman I would trust for you."

Our honeymoon was an unalloyed joy. We flew to Italy together and I had the rare privilege of personally conducting someone who was capable of appreciating the delights I laid before her—Rome, Venice, Zürich and Florence. These were places Anne had never visited, but it actually was the happy ending of a story begun some years earlier. As an economics student at Oxford and in Liége, Belgium, she was about to leave for a trip through Italy, but World War II

broke out, interrupting not only this trip but the continuation of her studies.

Anne's keen appreciation of the imperishable works of the masters that she saw on this trip was a spur for her to return to her long-neglected brush and palette. Her revived passion continues to this day, and I like to think that I helped to inspire her proper appreciation of her own creative gift.

A former tournament tennis player, Anne got me back on the courts. Our virtuosity as a doubles team has won the respect of the catgut devotees among our Long Island neighbors. It was Anne, too, who discovered my green thumb and who taught me many of the mysteries and pleasures of gardening, which we enjoy together at our summer home in Water Mill, Long Island.

One night when Anne and I were returning to our place after a party in Water Mill, we found all the windows open and all the lights blazing in our little cottage. I was immediately struck with a premonition of tragedy which turned out to be only too accurate. Juanita lay on the kitchen floor in a coma.

Poor Juanita had suffered a stroke and evidently fighting its cruel effects had managed to light up the house to attract attention. But no one had recognized her distress signal, and my good friend died before morning.

Anne and I made the arrangements for her funeral services in a Harlem chapel. It was crowded by her many friends, most of whom had been beneficiaries of her great heart at one time or another. Mrs. La Guardia was among them.

On the platform that held Juanita's coffin, an old lady, her closest friend, sat in attendance in an old-fashioned rocking chair. Her friends joined in singing Juanita's favorite hymns, one following the other with scarcely an interruption. When-

ever a lull occurred, and there were few, the voice of the old lady in the rocking chair would lead the others into a new hymn. As they sang, they rocked in their chairs, and it seemed to me that, rather than a dirge, a lullaby was carrying Juanita to her rest.

Someone read two or three of Juanita's poems. They seemed to gain new meaning in this emotion-charged atmosphere. It was difficult for me to finish the simple eulogy I had prepared. Not only had I lost a warm friend, but another link was broken with the great man who had opened so many new paths to understanding and love.

Chapter XVIII

In the spring of 1948, out of the travail of suffering European Jewry and on the ashes of their six million dead, the State of Israel was born and immediately baptized in the flaming assault of five Arab nations with a combined population of over forty million to Israel's six hundred thousand.

The history of this realization of a two-thousand-year dream can be told in one brief paragraph. In November of the previous year the United Nations General Assembly voted to accept a recommendation of its own Special Committee on Palestine that the country be partitioned into separate Jewish and Arab states. The latter, under the leadership of the Arab League, immediately announced their determination to resist, by force if necessary, the implementation of this UN action. In this confused and sporadically violent period the British ended their mandate and on May 14 marched out of the country. The Jewish National Council, a representative body of Jewish leaders in Palestine, promptly declared their sovereignty as an independent nation and within forty-eight hours the infant republic was attacked on all sides by the armies of Egypt, Jordan, Syria,

Lebanon and Iraq. Against these odds, the rugged Jewish settlers and the newly arrived "illegal" immigrants, tempered by their cruelly hard existence in concentration camps, stood off the attacks on all fronts and eventually sent the Arab armies reeling across the desert. Hostilities ended when the UN intervened and arranged an armistice.

The United States barely beat the Soviet Union in the race to be the first nation to recognize the sovereignty of Israel. The two major powers were quickly joined by most of the other members of the United Nations and before long Israel was admitted into that body.

I had been eager to visit Israel from the day of its birth. As I prepared to leave on a second trip to Yugoslavia in 1951, I discussed the possibility of going to Israel after my mission was completed. My friends at the State Department agreed and asked me, if possible, to meet with Ben-Gurion and discreetly discuss with him the advisability of slowing down Israel's burgeoning immigration. There was concern in Washington over the increasing flow of refugees eastward from Europe and the rising cost of economic assistance through government channels for their transportation. Fears had been expressed that this non-budgeted expenditure might get out of hand.

When I landed in Israel in October, 1951, three and a half years after its birth, I immediately understood why the Arab nations were confident that economic pressure would be enough to cut short the infant nation's life. A report I saw in the American Embassy in Tel Aviv contained a statement of this Arab policy. It said, in part:

> The Jews have won a freak military victory. We will now choke them to death economically.

Scars of the war with the Arabs, called by the Israeli their War of Independence, were very much in evidence. Wherever I went I saw wreckage of homes, farms and other buildings. The few roads that existed in the country were barely passable in places, and barbed wire forced its ugliness on the countryside as well as in the crowded cities.

Stringent austerity and unbelievably hard work were the order of the day. The scarcity of food touched the lives of everyone in Israel. I can recall returning to the King David Hotel in Jerusalem after a long day of touring settlements in outlying districts. Utterly fatigued by my many hours in the hot sun and dry air, I looked forward to my dinner and a good night's sleep. The rich table linens and well-polished silver, a reminder of the days when this was the home of higher-echelon British officialdom in Palestine, were there. But my dinner consisted of thin potato soup and a chicken wing. I noted my reaction in my diary that evening: "If this is what a visitor in the country's leading hotel is allotted," I wrote, "I can estimate the meager menu in the average family."

Years later, David Horowitz, Governor of the Bank of Israel, told me how dangerously close to economic collapse the struggling little state had been at the time of my first visit. A parched land with little industry, precious few dollars to import even the absolute necessities, it was struggling gallantly for survival against immeasurably superior odds.

There was then and still is a very special flavor in the courage and dynamism of the people of Israel. Despite the rigors of their difficult life and the self-imposed task of building a nation out of sand and stone, they appear to gain strength from a constant inner search for a cultural life. On one of the first evenings of my visit I attended a concert in

a packed hall in Jerusalem. The Israel Symphony Orchestra was performing with fine professional polish, but I was fascinated by the audience. Old and young, of an infinite variety of backgrounds, their skin burned deep by desert sun, they all clearly showed signs of fatigue and a hard life. But even those who were standing listened raptly to a fifty-minute uninterrupted performance of a Bruckner symphony.

There could be no denying the strangulating effect of the Arab boycott. The influx of thousands of newcomers each month seriously aggravated the already pinched circumstances. But these were people who, after ten and twelve hours of strenuous labor in the hot sun, would pile into a jeep or a truck or climb onto an antique motorcycle and travel over dangerous roads to the city to hear a Bruckner symphony, difficult musical fare in the best of conditions.

In this atmosphere, I called on the Prime Minister in his modest, even austere, little office in Jerusalem. Still a dramatic-looking man with his antlers of white hair shooting out in all directions, there were signs of a marked change in Ben-Gurion since I had last seen him. The ordeal of leading his people into freedom had left its mark. His searching, penetrating eyes were still lit by the luster that marks the visionary, but now they were deeply set in their sockets, and their piercing steel-grayness would from time to time be clouded by weariness.

We sat down to tea served in glasses, a heritage of Ben-Gurion's earlier days in Poland. Once the amenities were over, however, and before I could ask my first tentative question, he impaled me with those firm gray eyes and said, "If you are going to ask me about restricting immigration into Israel, the answer is No. The doors of this nation are

open to every Jew everywhere who wants to return home. There will be no limitations."

Set back on my heels, I ventured that among his other signal attributes, he might be a mind reader.

But Ben-Gurion interrupted. "Israel is the homeland for all the Jews," he insisted, "not by sufferance but by right." And, he reiterated, no one would be denied his "rightful home."

I said that I had not come to argue, that I could appreciate the passion of his conviction, but had he estimated the cost of admitting immigrants into Israel if they continued at the present rate?

Ben-Gurion countered by asking if I knew the cost. I gave him the figure that had been cited in the State Department, two billion dollars. I might just as well have said two thousand dollars, so far as his reaction was concerned. He didn't even wince.

"Precisely," he said. "Two billion dollars. Fine. We'll find the money somewhere: we will *do* it."

As I had told Ben-Gurion, I wasn't there to argue. I had delivered my message, you might say, but, based on my own experiences in 1944 and 1945, no one knew better than I the importance of such a haven. Call it a homeland or what you will, the people flocking to Israel had no place else to go. And I was beginning to believe that even if they had an alternative, Israel would be the goal for most of them. They had their fill of being an unwanted minority. I couldn't share Ben-Gurion's optimism about raising two billion dollars. I am still not absolutely convinced that he was as certain of the future as he sounded. But I felt assured as I left the Prime Minister's office that somehow that gate would remain open.

As I continued my daily tours of the little country, I found many reasons to strengthen my belief in Israel's future. Wherever I went something new was happening. My visit to Beersheba, for instance, fell on the day that the community's surface transit system—one bus—was inaugurated, and I was honored by sharing the front seat of the shiny new vehicle with the mayor on its maiden voyage. The mayor, Tuvikhu, I discovered to be one of the refugees I had helped out of Rumania. A vigorous man of irrepressible optimism, he pointed out rough huts that were replacing the tents of the newcomers, and as we drove past one dusty bare spot after another he would say, "Here we will have a theater for the cinema and here a concert hall and here . . ." A dreamer, I thought, and a charming one. Who could believe that in just a few years his seemingly brash statements would be beggared by the rush of events and that Beersheba, an ancient Arab market place, would be a thriving, bustling city with over twenty thousand inhabitants?

On most of my trips in the field, I was escorted by a guide from the Jewish National Fund. While I had always managed to escape direct involvement or association with any specific group, no matter how appealing its cause, I could not resist the scope of this organization's program and the downright common sense of its leadership under Mendel Fisher, Executive Director for more than twenty-five years. It is now headed by the dynamic Dr. Joseph P. Sternstein.

The Fund's principal function, dating back to the earliest days of Zionism, was to buy land and develop it for settlement. I am sure that many sheiks busy spending their unexpected wealth on the Riviera would be amazed to see what these Jewish "madmen" have done with their barren or swampy fields. In hard fact, one of the criteria used by the

UN Commission which drew up the lines for the partition of Palestine was land purchased by the Jewish National Fund.

The greatest challenge, however, was to restore the health of the soil; the battle was not against marauders or attacking armies but against the depredations of centuries of neglect and ill-use. These victories were celebrated not with banners but with plants, trees and flowers to fill the crevices left after the desert winds had blown away the eroded soil—mountains of emptiness standing like skeletons in the sun.

Armed with modern knowledge and technology, the agronomists nevertheless revived the ancient methods of retaining the water of the winter rains. Their little reservoirs were not far removed from the cisterns mentioned so often by their forefathers in the Old Testament.

Many of the major break-throughs in the development of farmlands in the central and southern areas of the country would have to wait a few years for the construction of pipelines financed by the sale of Israel bonds in the United States. But even at the time of my first visit to Israel, my guides were able to show me the first fruits of these tireless efforts. Their triumph came with the three-inch saplings, nurtured with loving care, now repaying their kindness in the form of trees, two feet tall, on hillsides that had known nothing but rocks for centuries.

Joseph Weitz, a short, wiry agronomist with steel springs for legs, led me through rocky fields and up steep slopes to admire some of his "children." To him the growing of green things was a religion. We would cross a field lush with wheat, and he would point out that not too long ago this had been a swamp where malaria had taken the lives of many pioneers. Then up a stone-covered hill we would clamber,

and Weitz would stamp on its hard white limestone surface, explaining, "Three or four feet of precious soil was washed off this hillside down to this bedrock." And he would sadly shake his head as if to mourn such neglect.

Then Weitz spoke of the fifty million trees that had been planted by that time and of the two hundred million more that would be put into the soil in the next decade. It is difficult for an American to understand the fervor with which this land reclamation goes forward, but to anyone who knows the Middle East, the arid nudity of the mountains of the Greek islands, the ranges of parched hills in Jordan and Syria and the vast stretches of desert, the man-grown trees of Israel are a verdant miracle.

Near the Egyptian border at the Gaza strip, I watched an Israeli girl planting flowers. On her knees in front of her small prefabricated two-room house, she patiently sifted the soil through her fingers, separating the stones from the sand. Then, holding her flowers tenderly, she set their roots in shallow holes she had scooped out of the newly restored earth. Doling out drops of precious water, she tamped down the ground with her hands, patting the soil almost lovingly as one would handle a newborn child. As I watched this girl perform her act of love for the soil, I thought that here was the symbol of Israel—a portent of clover in the desert.

We went north, hard by the Syrian border, where under the guns of Syrian soldiers ready to fire at us if we ventured too far in their direction, I looked down on the vast wasteland of black pools and forests of the Huleh Valley. Here was a challenge of another kind for the engineers and planners.

With the guidance and direction of J. R. Sensibar of Chicago, a man who must surely be rated as an engineering genius, work was already under way to drain the huge papy-

rus marshes and lakes of the Huleh Basin to make it the richest farmland of Israel—45,000 acres of fertile soil, land which would support 100,000 people.

Looking at the blackness of the Huleh I was reminded of our great Everglades and Okefenokee Swamps. They are much the same, even to the wild boars which inhabit both regions. It was inconceivable to me that this wilderness could be penetrated, but already Israeli bulldozers had entered and begun to clear land where no man had been before.

My trip was not publicized in Israel. Still, a group of refugees from the Balkan countries, whom I had helped reach Israel, knew of my presence and planned a ceremony which climaxed my visit and gave new meaning to my earlier efforts in Turkey. Furthermore, it tied me irrevocably to the soil of Israel. These friends of mine, unknown to me as individuals I must admit, had arranged to plant a mile of trees in my name, the first in a projected Martyrs Forest planned by the Jewish National Fund.

We met on a hillside ten miles outside of Jerusalem. It was a clear November afternoon, and the flags of the once free Balkan nations mingled with Old Glory and Israel's Star of David, held clear of their masts by a freshening wind.

The U.S. Ambassador, Monett Davis, whose appreciation of Israel's problems and helpfulness in those crucial days will never be forgotten by the people of Israel, shared the honor of setting the first saplings into the ground. I know that he was sympathetic to the significance of this verdant memorial, but he could not have felt the emotions which stormed through me as we knelt to our task—the bitter memories of Germany, Austria, Rumania and Bulgaria.

All of us who participated in the brief ceremony shared the general feeling of reverence for those who had been martyred and the spirit of resurgence implicit in the rebirth of the land, but each of us had his secret thoughts, his private memorial. Ambassador Davis, Dov Joseph, Cabinet Minister, Dr. Abraham Granott, president of the J.N.F., and I made brief speeches. We all spoke quietly and were received in the same manner. This was no time for fanfare.

When it was my turn I felt that there was little to add to what the planting ceremony itself had already implied. "The six million," I said, "cannot be brought back. But we can back the six million with a revived life force, now raising its arms to the sky. Thus does a nation once humiliated and dispersed renew the broken thread of its noble history on the land that it is bringing back to life."

It was twilight when we drove back to Jerusalem. Preoccupied with memories set loose by the events of the day, I cannot even recall who rode with me. As we climbed up to the city I was again struck by the mystical beauty of its aura in that magic hour. On the back of an envelope, I wrote a little rhyme which I clearly remember:

> The ancient hills arise in golden light/As sun bends down to kiss the bride of night.

I carried back to America with me the sharply drawn and never to be forgotten image of the bustling, creative activity of Israel in its first years. The new vitality of the refugees and their affinity for the renewed soil blended into an admixture which inspired me to activity in organizations I had shunned through the years. I became immersed in the work

of the Foundation for the Jewish National Fund, a special body organized to establish long-range financing to insure the continuation of the tree planting and land reclamation program. In fact, I became the Foundation's first president and spent some time traveling across the country in its behalf.

Chapter XIX

While I was in Yugoslavia and Israel the crusade to bring good music into New York homes by way of WABF-FM was continuing. There had been some signs of appreciation of what I was trying to do. *The Saturday Review of Literature* had published a flattering piece entitled "Radio as it Should Be," which subsequently was reprinted in *Reader's Digest* for its six million circulation. I was pleased to note that the writer had included among other concerns for the listener that we at WABF even checked the voices of our announcers by the decibel—our way of coming into people's living rooms on tiptoe rather than shouting our way in.

There were other honors. The Department of State singled out the WABF concerts for rebroadcast to listeners all over the world. And, in 1950, I received a George Foster Peabody Award, radio's Oscar, for "... the integrity of his musical presentation ... for creating in WABF a unique, relaxing and reliable treasure house."

I had published the station's credo, which aimed at eliminating many of the major abuses that had fastened onto the radio industry. I cite only the frequent interruptions for loud

and often repetitive commercial announcements. And I worked hard to implement my beliefs that broadcasting, once freed from these sins, could soar to new heights as an instrument of communication and mass education as well as entertainment.

I engaged Ignace Strasfogel, now a Metropolitan Opera conductor, as music director, and together we set our sights on programs which respected the intelligence of our listeners. The same standard applied to information programs. When Adlai Stevenson was candidate for the presidency in 1952, his historic speeches were repeated on the station night after night. The Hunter College Opera Work Shop, which I had helped introduce at the school, broadcast programs on a regular schedule. And the full concerts of the New Friends of Music were carried on Sunday evenings from five-thirty to seven without interruption or commercial announcements.

We printed a magazine which carried our programs, but with approximate scheduling because we did not constrict our shows to fit precise split-second timing. To allow our performers and speakers complete relaxation, we permitted them to run over or under their allotted time by a few minutes if necessary.

I must admit that this violation of one of radio's most sacred precepts did occasionally cause confusion among some of our listeners, especially when a program ran over the scheduled time. We would receive questioning phone calls at the station and sometimes complaints. One evening I decided to answer personally a telephone complaint from an irate lady in New Jersey. A playing of the Schubert *Trio, Opus 99,* was running over by several minutes. My caller demanded to know why the next program was not on the air. In keeping with the station's high standards of comportment

as well as program content, I politely asked her: "Madam, what better use could you make of two minutes than to hear an unhurried, complete ending of a Schubert *Trio*?"

An unmistakable click, although it sounded discreetly low to me at the time, was her reply.

I refused to be diverted from my conviction that despite the bombardment by the commonplace which assaults the ears of American listeners, if given the choice they would prefer the best. If never offered this choice, and in the absence of standards other than the mediocre, they can only accept that to which they are exposed.

Many years earlier I had proved with a group of children ten and eleven years old at a settlement house in New York's lower East side that, given the opportunity, their desires and tastes would gravitate toward the best. These were children with no musical experience of any kind. Once a week they would gather while I played the piano for them. One evening, I began with snatches of popular jazz and gradually led into more serious music such as the sentimental descriptive excerpts from Debussy's *Clair de Lune.* I ended with the slow introduction of the second movement of the Beethoven *Piano Sonata, Opus 109,* one of the simplest and most profound pieces of musical speech in the entire piano literature.

The youngsters listened restlessly at first but gradually settled down, their attentiveness modulating into quiet concentration. When asked for their preference, at the end of the evening, they were unanimous in their vote for the Beethoven. Their reasons were in the same vein: "Like a prayer . . . It was so peaceful . . . Like a nice dream . . ."

This is not to say that I necessarily advocate a solid diet of Beethoven sonatas as musical fare for our children. But I am convinced that the level at which we peg our educational

aims at home and in school will approximate the level that will be established as standards later in life. Even Americans, with their profligacy of possessions and distractions, deserve to be exposed to the best.

But the medium I had chosen to gain this salutary end, FM broadcasting, was in the crippling grip of competition it couldn't cope with. Television had begun to boom and the music lovers I wanted to reach, having despaired of hearing sounds that were not blurred in their AM radios, had turned to the newly developed high fidelity recordings to satisfy their needs for most sensitive reproduction. I still insist that this was an unnatural detour which resulted from the denial of modern transmission through the air waves.

All of my plans at WABF were to create the right instrument for taking the best advantage of FM's ability to transmit good music faithfully without the interruptions of man-made noises. By eliminating the muffled AM sound, it was as though the middle section of the notes of the piano were suddenly extended all the way to include all the trebles and basses which heretofore had not been heard on radio. And to me it was obviously the perfect medium for chamber music, which had been written to be heard in a kind of semi-privacy. Now it could be heard as it should be in everyone's home—where it *is* at home.

I have no intention at this time to engage in any diatribe against the machinations of certain broadcasting and manufacturing interests which resulted in the derailing of FM as an established radio system in this country. Stated simply, the broadcasters who were also major manufacturers of radio equipment preferred to retain their monopoly and would not provide FM receiving sets at a price to meet the pocketbooks of the middle-income groups.

I knew from our mail and press comments that our high standards were satisfying a devoted clan of listeners. But, hampered by industry resistance to FM and the concomitant high cost to the consumer, our audience at best was a minority. To put FM broadcasting on a solid commercial footing, advertisers were needed, and these gentlemen followed the mass audience to sell their wares. So despite our many accolades and an impassioned loyal following, WABF continued to lose approximately $50,000 a year.

Forced to accept the sad conclusion that the idealistic level of our program structure precluded commercial success, and not being in a position to continue such an expensive hobby, I began to think about what to do with my precious white elephant. Rather than abandon it, sell it for conversion into just another high-pressure commercial station, I decided to offer it as an outright gift to the United Nations, a plan in which Harry Scherman enthusiastically concurred.

I even supplied the United Nations with a complete program format for the dissemination of information, folk music and background material on the member countries, in addition to multilingual coverage of the meetings of the General Assembly, Security Council and major committees. Dag Hammarskjöld received me in his office and together we set the machinery in motion for the transfer of our equipment from the Hotel Pierre to United Nations headquarters on the East River. At the last minute, however, and with no explanation, I was told that our gift would have to be rejected. It was intimated unofficially that the Soviet Union had objected on the grounds that a station in New York would not be able to maintain objective universality.

Eventually the station was sold to a group who turned it

into a public supported station with new call letters—WBAI. Almost ten years would pass before the sheer weight of demand by audiences for a better mousetrap would cause the manufacturers to capitulate and offer the public FM sets at reasonable prices. The people at last were to get what they long deserved and had been denied. Ironically, the ability to transmit undistorted and static-free music had made FM the accepted standard of broadcasting in many European countries. It could well be that the import of German-made and Japanese-made FM equipment, rather than any unilateral desire to provide the best for the listening audience, spurred domestic manufacturers into the FM market.

With typical insouciance and positiveness, Artur Schnabel announced a deep personal tragedy which befell him in 1951. He called me shortly before his final American concert and almost exultantly reported an astonishing discovery—he could play without any need to look at the notes on the piano. I knew immediately that his rapidly failing eyesight had worsened, and that this was his way of anticipating blindness.

I covered up my sense of shock by talking of my own playing. I told him I was studying the *Opus 90 Sonata* of Beethoven with his son, Karl Ulrich. "Good," was his reply. "I think I will include it in my program."

His performance the next evening at the Hunter College auditorium was, as always, unique and electrifying. Karl and I listened with heavy hearts. We sensed that this would be his last concert—that we were approaching a great finale in the making of music. I phoned Schnabel the next morning to thank him for the happiness he had again provided with his Beethoven, and I questioned him about the *Opus 90 Sonata.*

There was a distinct change of interpretation since his recording and even the last time I heard him play it in a previous concert. "Of course," he said with characteristic ebullience. "I should expect it would be different. I hope I improve every day."

"*Immer weiter*—ever forward," was the phrase he would use to urge his pupils to a propulsive rhythm. He applied the same words to himself with equal stringency in all things.

Shortly before he left that summer for his beloved Swiss mountains that were his summer retreat, we again discussed my musical studies. It had become increasingly difficult for me to keep up with my work and pursue a busy career in business as well as the many extracurricular activities which continued to grow in importance. He exacted a strange commitment from me. "Promise me," he begged, "that you will practice ten minutes every day."

It seemed little enough, so I quickly assented. Soon, however, I realized how well my friend knew me and everyone who had ever come to him for help and instruction. It is impossible to stop in ten minutes. The habit of daily practice has since become so ingrained that any day which begins without a warm-up at the piano seems to be built on a void. It is more than a habit, it is a fulfillment of a sage assurance Schnabel offered me in that last conversation. "Keep up your music," he said. "When you feel lost in the world, you can always turn to your piano. You will never be alone."

Later that summer, in August, I was notified of his passing. I was at Water Mill at the time and my immediate reaction was to walk toward the ocean alone to ponder on my loss for I felt that a luminous star in the universe had suddenly dimmed. As I made my way slowly toward the rolling surf and was captured by the majesty and regularity of the

rhythm of the sea, I suddenly became aware of a subtle infusion into my consciousness of Schnabel's music. I felt the sublime breathing of his Schubert *Impromptu Opus 90 No. 3* and was able to take strength, almost happiness, from the knowledge of a bottomless reservoir of musical understanding my great friend had left with me.

Chapter XX

Suddenly in Egypt, in the summer of 1952, the long-expected occurred. The government of King Farouk was overthrown in a military coup and the fat monarch fled to the other side of the Mediterranean where, on the Riviera's Gold Coast, he joined with other relics of archaic dynasties to live out his days in pleasurable exile. He probably owes his life to Jefferson Caffery, the United States Ambassador to Egypt, who gave him refuge until he was able to get away to Capri.

To the outside world, this revolution was led by fifty-five-year-old Mohammed Naguib, the popular general who was installed as President of the newly proclaimed republic. Attractive as well as popular, he was excellent window dressing for Colonel Gamal Abdel Nasser and his clique of young unknowns while they consolidated their position as the real heads of the new Egypt.

Despite many years of subjugation and exploitation, Egypt, with its twenty-two million people, strategically situated on the Nile, remained the key nation in the Middle East complex and the strongest of the Arab countries. The United States and our allies were concerned lest Nasser's

new power and assertive independence might upset the delicate equilibrium of the volatile Middle East. Only a few years had passed since our prodigious oil interests in Iran had undergone a genuine scare engineered by the wily Mohammed Mossadegh. And the Soviet Union, certainly as eager as any of its Tsarist forebears to gain a foothold in this oil-rich part of the world, was hovering like a vulture over the area.

At this juncture our Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, set out on one of his inevitable fact-finding tours and returned from the Middle East with typically devastating results. After meeting with the heads of the countries in the area and exchanging gifts and promises of co-operation with them, our highly mobile Secretary of State flew smilingly back to Washington with a brand new U.S. policy for the Middle East—the misbegotten plan for a Northern Tier, later known as the Baghdad Pact.

The ostensible author of this plan, Henry A. Byroade, was essentially a military man and his scheme was devised along military lines. A West Pointer, handsome and persuasive, Byroade had been brought into the State Department by General Marshall. After a stint in West Germany he succeeded George Allen as head of the Middle East desk in 1951. Not long after, probably in payment for his "creative planning," he was appointed Ambassador to Egypt.

The "Northern Tier" referred to a phalanx of Middle East nations who were to form a "*cordon sanitaire*" around the southern border of the Soviet Union. They were to be organized into a concerted military operation with headquarters in Baghdad. This being his base of operations, Nuri el Said, Iraq's ruthless strong man, thus assured himself the key position in this new strategic alignment. Many Middle East

experts credit Nuri, a former Turkish officer and a friend of T. E. Lawrence, with being the actual originator of the scheme which was subsequently "sold" to Byroade and Dulles.

This attempt to shore up Iraq's shaky monarchy by making it the political center of the Middle East was from its inception a fuse in a potentially explosive situation. It is sufficient to say that the plan succeeded in doing what it set out to *undo*. The very existence of a Northern Tier implied a Southern Tier and it was in that sphere, under the growing influence of Colonel Nasser, that the Baghdad Pact was regarded as an affront and an intrusion. Byroade himself, a boy scout when compared to Nasser, was hardly the man to offset the hurt created by his own ineptitude, and it wasn't long before he was hopelessly on the defensive.

Meanwhile, Nasser continued to grow in power. The unexpected ease with which he engineered his revolution was heady wine for a man who dreamed of Pan-Arabism with himself at the head of eighty million Moslems. His ambitions were no secret; they were recorded in his *Philosophy of the Revolution,* a minor-league *Mein Kampf.*

The thorn in Nasser's side was Israel. He could never forget the humiliation of defeat in 1948 when he was a young officer of the Egyptian troops that were driven out of the Negev by the ragtail Haganah irregulars. Nasser pressed and intensified the economic boycott of Israel and was considered responsible for the creation of the infamous Fedayeen, Egyptian-trained Arab guerrillas, usually Palestinian, whose murderous nightly forays over the border kept the beleaguered Israeli settlers off balance. How effective this technique was and how costly the eventual retaliatory raids by Israeli troops, would remain to be seen. But, certainly, the stability in the

Middle East that Dulles had been seeking was becoming more remote.

Our own official attitude toward Nasser alternated between generous support and truculent defiance. A born opportunist, Nasser found support at the Bandung Conference in April, 1955, where he met Pandit Nehru, the perennial Prime Minister of the subcontinent of India, for the first time. It is said that Nehru was Nasser's tutor in the popular game of exploiting the mutual fear and distrust of the United States and Soviet Russia; of playing one off against the other. Nasser proved an apt pupil.

In the spring of 1955 I was seated at lunch in Washington with George Allen, who had returned as head man of the Middle East desk after Byroade was appointed Ambassador to Cairo. Our deteriorating situation was on both our minds, so it wasn't long before I embarked on a critique of our position. Allen was an old friend. There was no need for diplomatic language.

"Somebody is making a mess of things in Cairo," I exploded. "At the rate things are going, it is bound to blow up."

"Nasser is a tough baby," Allen answered in kind. "It's easy enough to sit here in Washington and criticize. Do you think you could do any better?"

"I certainly couldn't do much worse."

"How would you like a free ride to Cairo?" Allen countered.

Serious now, I told him that I would love it, but I felt that if I did go it would be better that I do so on my own. "If I go for the Department," I said, "I would be suspect, and besides, I would be saddled with a policy that I don't agree with."

It was settled that I would make my own arrangements

to meet Nasser, but that I would report daily to the embassy in Cairo on whatever transpired. I also planned a trip to Israel and to look in on Prime Minister Menderes in Turkey for Allen. He wanted me to make some economic and political soundings in an area that I knew so well.

Once again what started as a routine luncheon ended as the beginning of an important mission and one of the most exciting experiences of my life. I left for Egypt almost immediately, this time accompanied by my wife Anne.

I decided to take Anne with me on my trip to Egypt, Israel and Turkey to give her a firsthand view of the Middle East—the only way she could get some understanding of the area and its problems. It was a wise decision of great benefit to both of us.

From the moment of our landing at midnight in the desert stillness of Egypt's El Maza airport, Anne got her first taste of Arab inefficiency. Typical confusion with customs officials delayed us over an hour and when we finally found a taxicab, its vintage positively predated 1941. I recognized it as one of the types used during the war thirteen years earlier—and they weren't new then.

As we bounced and swerved along the rutted road for more than an hour, Anne began to show her misgivings about having come along. It was 3 A.M. when we finally arrived at the deserted lobby of the Hotel Semiramis. Three hours later, the sun rose and brought with it another of the delights of Egyptian life for Anne's education—the flies. These beasts—I refuse to think of them as mere insects—have nothing in common with the flies we know in the United States. They look and sound more like bees, but if they have the same mobility, they just don't seem interested in using it. Once they land on you, usually on your face, they stay there, un-

moved by any mere wave of your hand. You either squash them where they are squatting, or you risk injuring yourself by batting, not swatting, them off. In any event sleep, however badly needed, was impossible for us.

The next trial of an Egyptian day is breakfast, and I undertook to instruct Anne along these lines. We elected to eat on the balcony of our suite overlooking the Nile. The menu provided yogurt, rolls and croissants. The yogurt was milky and inedible and the rolls too tough to negotiate. The croissants, however, were soft and inviting. We decided to try our luck with them. Just at that time we were both hit with our first assault of "gyppy tummy," the well-advertised local ailment which defies description in polite terms: we ran.

On our return we found the rolls still on the table, but the croissants had disappeared. The culprits were still around, a group of ugly, black, hook-beaked vultures who had evidently staked their claim on us earlier in the day. They perched on the balcony next door leering at us and waited for the next course. This was not an entirely new experience for me, so I called our waiter back, ordered a new batch of croissants and laid out my strategy. From that first morning on, that balcony was hardly ever deserted: we tried to have one of us stand guard. The waiter found it all very amusing, and to this day, I am certain, he was making book with his colleagues as to who would get more croissants, we or those blasted vultures. Anne never lets me forget his smiling query each time we would reorder breakfast, *"Les oiseaux, Madame?"*

I accepted the use of the car and chauffeur the Egyptian Government had offered me, although I must confess some reservations about the latter. As one might expect, his name was Mohammed Ali. A man with an abhorrence for shoes,

he would drive with his grimy bare foot pressing the gas pedal to the floor and one of his hands exerting the same pressure on the horn. We never did get used to that, especially when he raced through Cairo's narrow streets, which were always thronged with people selling everything from fly swatters to aphrodisiacs. The natives regarded accidents as acts of Allah, but Anne and I preferred to walk whenever possible, leaving Mohammed asleep, curled up on the back seat.

The teeming streets with their countless beggars were Anne's undoing. Old-timers in Cairo become accustomed to their horrors, but my sensitive wife with her concern for human dignity was constantly on the verge of illness as these miserable, disease-ridden derelicts, many of them with oozing sores and empty eye sockets, would approach us and grasp at our clothing as they beseeched us for alms. All this in heat that varied only from 110 to 120 degrees, was insupportable.

Meanwhile, I maintained my pursuit of an appointment with Nasser. I had come armed with two letters which I felt would bring results. One of them, from Ralph Bunche, introduced me to the correspondent of *Newsweek*, an Egyptian with whom Bunche had become friendly during the Armistice negotiations on the Island of Rhodes in 1948. This gentleman said he would be glad to arrange an appointment if I thought I could get Ben-Gurion to cede some Israel territory in advance. I couldn't accept this presumptuousness from a magazine writer, even had it been possible. Our two-hour meeting was fruitless.

My second letter was from Arthur Sulzberger to Kennet Love, the *New York Times* correspondent in Egypt. Kennet introduced me to Abdul Kader Hatem, the man in full charge of propaganda in the new government and one of Nasser's

closest advisers. Love's charming wife, Felicity, took charge of Anne while I made the rounds of my appointments in the city.

In my talks with Hatem, I repeatedly emphasized that I did not speak officially for anyone. I didn't represent either the U.S. Government and its embassy nor could I, as an American, hold any brief for Israel: I was there as a man of peace. He promised to arrange a meeting.

As I waited a full week after that, my patience wore exceedingly thin until finally, at 7 P.M. on the last day of the week, a huge black car, which Anne was certain was a hearse, drove up to the hotel. I was bundled into it by two fully armed oversized soldiers. Hatem was in the back seat. The car first took us to Heliopolis, a Cairo suburb, where I was told we would have to wait a while. Hatem and I shared tea and a shoeshine and then moved to a shady spot where we talked. I was beginning to wonder if this wasn't another phase of the runaround when at eight-thirty a car drove up to take us on the last leg of our journey. This time we were dropped off past the guards at the entrance to Nasser's modest suburban home. Hatem entered with me and stayed throughout the interview.

A big, handsome fellow with swarthy skin and curly black hair, Nasser was completely relaxed, even nonchalant, and I made a mental note to beware of falling under his well-publicized charm. Throughout our conversation he spoke slowly and carefully in accented English. Even when he was intent on emphasizing some point, his voice was evenly modulated, but he was not averse to colloquial speech when it served his purpose.

"I am shopping around," he told me. "If I don't get large

arms from the United States, I'll get them from the Germans, or the Russians."

Since this came after a protestation of his desire for peace, I questioned his need for large arms if, as he had told me, he had no plans to use them.

"The United States offered me arms," he continued slowly. "But they were small arms. I've got plenty of those." Then, his black eyes flashing, he departed momentarily from his easy conversational tone to emphasize, "When Israel attacked at Gaza, the whole history of Egypt changed."

The "attack" he was referring to was a major border incident that had taken place the night of February 28, 1955. The culmination of a long series of hostile acts, mostly Egyptian infiltrations, it resulted in the death of thirty-eight Egyptians and eight Israelis, with many on both sides wounded. The greatest number of Egyptian casualties occurred when one of their military trucks bearing reinforcements was destroyed. The Egyptians claimed that it had been ambushed. According to Israeli authorities, the truck had accidentally run over one of their own mines.

"I had just withdrawn some of my troops from the Gaza border," Nasser insisted. "I had intended to apply the savings there to the construction of new schools. When the Israelis attacked, I had to drop everything and rush to the border to direct operations there.

"I am a soldier," he continued. "It is my job to protect my people. Now I am reinforcing my armies at Gaza. If there are any more attacks"—he paused to fix me with a long, unwavering look—"my planes will be over Tel Aviv in twenty minutes."

I reminded him that this would undoubtedly mean Israeli planes over Cairo, and I emphasized that I hadn't come to

talk war but peace. Seeking to draw him into conversation along those lines I told Nasser that this was my first visit to Cairo since 1946 and that I was impressed by the changes he had brought about in the short time since he had taken office. "You have in your hands the power to change the course of Egypt's history," I offered, "but without peace you are lost."

"Peace is not for me to decide," he said quietly.

I determined to speak out openly. I admitted my interest in Israel and my friendship with some leaders of Israel's Government, adding quickly that I knew nothing about their military plans. I told him I was going to Israel by way of Cyprus after our talks and that I intended to see Moshe Sharett, and Ben-Gurion, who had just returned to active participation in the government as Defense Minister. But I wanted to bring them a message of peace, not war. I suggested, almost flippantly, that every time he used the word "war" during our conversation I was going to say "peace."

"Why not give me a few small things to take with me, a few minor concessions," I ventured boldly.

"Tell me," he countered, "what concessions is Israel prepared to make?"

I opened my eyes wide and, feigning surprise, I said, "But after all, Israel won the war. I've never heard of the time when the winner was supposed to make concessions to the loser."

Nasser in his turn matched my astonishment. "But that was Farouk's war," he said with a gesture as if to dismiss it.

Jokingly I told him that he reminded me of our Republicans and Democrats, each party blaming the other for misdeeds of the previous administration, but I emphasized that, in any case, he was now the head of the state and was responsible for its actions.

With typical alacrity he changed the subject. "Do you know how many schools were built in Farouk's regime? One," he said, holding up his forefinger dramatically, "and I built twelve last year alone."

After I congratulated him, he made another of his quick switches, bringing up the subject of the Baghdad Pact—as I expected, a sore point. "You are making a terrible mistake if you think you can do anything in this part of the world without Egypt," he said, looking at me pointedly.

I didn't protest, expressing rather our appreciation of Egypt's great tradition and strong position in the Middle East.

He pressed on, sneering at our financial support of Turkey and deriding Nuri el Said of Iraq. When I agreed with his estimate of Nuri, he demanded sharply, "Then why are you building a pact around Baghdad? Iraq isn't even a state. It is nothing but corrupt cliques, subsidized in one way or another by oil money. Nothing you can do in the Middle East without Egypt will work." Then, puffing calmly on his cigarette, one of an interminable chain of Craven "A"s, he stated simply, "Nuri will not be alive very long." I goggled at this startling disclosure so casually expressed, but made no comment. It was very much in my mind, however, when in July, 1958, the revolution in Iraq wiped out Nuri el Said, his coterie and the headquarters of the Baghdad Pact.

"Without Egypt the Arab States are nothing," he reiterated, "but Egypt without the Arab States is a power nevertheless."

Following this tack I asked if he meant that Egypt would be the sole power in the Middle East.

He shrugged his shoulders as if this were self-evident, and carried on, "There is no longer any room in this area for any

Western power. That goes not only for the British *and* the Americans, but for the French, perhaps even more so. This Moroccan business is no more than the beginning. You have probably heard that the Moroccan uprisings are planned in Cairo: they are."

Of course I had heard this said before by Abd el Krim, one of the leaders of the Rif rebellion, at a reception right in Cairo, but I was taken aback by the boldness and lack of frills in Nasser's forthright statement. Reverting to his complaints about the Baghdad Pact, I asked him, "What else, specifically, do you hold against the United States?"

"Broken promises," he fairly spat out. "One broken promise after another. Your government has made promise after promise to me. Promises were made to me in the American Embassy in the presence of Mr. Byroade and Mr. Dulles himself," he said with bitterness, "promises for guns, military equipment and five hundred million dollars. What has become of these promises? Nothing. Why should I trust you?"

I was flabbergasted. I couldn't imagine even Mr. Dulles promising a half billion dollars to the head of any foreign government. I said as much and suggested that it might have been a misunderstanding.

"I don't think so," Nasser retorted. "In any case, I have lost my patience. I shall probably take other steps."

I tried to pursue the matter further, but he was off on another tack. After listening to a varied list of complaints, I succeeded in bringing him back to the subject of Israel, and I cautiously hinted at what an exchange of goods and skills and medical aid could accomplish for both nations.

"How do you expect me to compete with Israel?" he demanded, "with their technicians and the flow of money from Jewish organizations in the United States?"

I answered that he didn't have to *compete* with the Israelis, but that he could *co-operate* with them. "The two regions fit each other," I concluded, "as though each were the answer to the other's need. Why won't you work with them?"

There was a pause. Finally, Nasser said, "I just don't trust Sharett."

Something in the quietness of his reply encouraged me. I told him that in the past week I had talked to many people in Cairo, especially Egyptians, and that I couldn't find an ordinary Egyptian who desired or was even interested in war with Israel. I pointed out that I had yet to meet an Israeli with the slightest desire for a war.

But, stubbornly, he repeated, "No, I've really lost my confidence in Sharett. It was my understanding that we had agreed—through a secret liaison, I don't mind letting you know—that there would be quiet along the Gaza border. Now with that gone, I cannot trust him."

"Colonel Nasser," I said quietly but firmly, "I am absolutely certain that if Sharett were sitting here instead of me, you two would get along well. Not that I am suggesting it," I injected quickly, "but some day it will happen. For the moment, we must begin with small steps. I know that if the Israeli leaders give me certain assurances to take back to you, they won't let you or me down."

He looked at me dubiously, and while I sipped at the sarsaparilla (of all things!) he had served, to let my hint sink in, he lit another cigarette. Nothing forthcoming, I took up another subject, not completely unrelated. I told him that the American people were ready to invest money and goods in Egypt, but that they would invest in peace, not war. With a smile I suggested that it might be a good idea for him to

destroy all pictures of himself in uniform to eradicate the impression in the States that he was essentially a military man.

Nasser laughed and turned to Hatem for the first time. "He may be right."

Our conversation had taken many turns, leading me into avenues where I had least expected to go. He even expressed his doubts about the Soviet Union's sincerity, and this while he was receiving daily shipments of arms and equipment from Czechoslovakia! He was typically Egyptian, a xenophobe. He just didn't trust foreigners—an old complaint in the Middle East and one which is repaid in kind.

After two and a half hours of rapid-fire exchange, it was time to go. "I will think over what you have been telling me," Nasser said with manifest sincerity, "and believe me, I look forward to seeing you again."

"Remember, Colonel Nasser," I said as we got up, "this is only a beginning I am making."

We shook hands vigorously and parted. Hatem led me into a little garden and along a shaded walk where soldiers with gleaming bayonets stood guard.

Buoyed up by the apparent friendliness in Nasser's tone and principally by his failure to shut off any of the possibilities of co-operation I had suggested, I felt that there was no time to be lost. Anne and I took the first plane to Cyprus, and on the evening of the next day we were on our way to Israel.

Ben-Gurion was amazed to hear that I had seen Nasser less than forty-eight hours before I met with him in his tiny apartment in the Eden Hotel in Jerusalem. "Did he know you were a Jew?" he asked.

"Of course," I replied. "His people checked up on me backwards and forwards. In fact, he had me followed for a

week before we met. The head of his Intelligence told me so."

Reading from my notes, I went on to tell him some of the details of my interview with Nasser. He listened with interest but appeared to be skeptical. Finally he interrupted to say with emphasis, "Nasser is not master in his own house."

I was amazed by his attitude. All the reports I had seen in Washington and in the United States Embassy in Cairo emphasized the contrary. And my own impression, although my visit to Egypt was brief, was that Nasser was obviously seated firmly in the saddle.

"Why do you say that?" I asked Ben-Gurion.

"My intelligence service," he said laconically.

As tactfully as I could I indicated that he might not have been well advised, but Ben-Gurion disregarded my remarks. We were suddenly interrupted by an aide with the announcement that the cabinet had just fallen. Ben-Gurion did not seem at all surprised. He merely smiled and excused himself, saying that he would have to go to the Knesset which was then in session. Before he left, however, we arranged to meet again at his home in Tel Aviv.

The fall of the government was occasioned by the so-called Kastner affair, a flashback to the final tragic days of Eichmann's reign of terror in Hungary.

Shortly after my arrival in Israel, someone from the Government Press Office had given me a copy of *The New York Times* which carried a front-page story by Kennet Love reporting an alleged statement by Dag Hammarskjöld to the effect that "It is heard here (Egypt) General E. L. M. Burns will be removed from his post for favoring Israel." No one was more amazed and disturbed by this than Burns, who had maintained a delicate balance of impartiality in a tenuous situation, and who certainly would have been the first to

know if Hammarskjöld was dissatisfied with his performance, had there been any truth to the story. I cabled Ralph Bunche at once, and the result was a complete denial by the UN Secretary General, in fact a strong statement of confidence in Burns.

As a result of this incident I was now convinced that an idea that had been brewing inside me since my arrival should immediately be presented to the publisher of the *Times*. Love, as I mentioned previously, was extremely helpful to me in Egypt, as had been many *New York Times* correspondents in other key situations during my missions and travels. But I soon learned after spending some time with him that this personable and hard-working young journalist, in the time of his assignment in Egypt, had absorbed the Nasser point of view and had neither understanding nor sympathy for the position of Israel vis-à-vis Egypt. Similarly, Harry Gilroy, the brilliant *New York Times* man in Israel, seemed to be ignorant or skeptical concerning anything positive on the Egyptian side of the line.

I knew that General Burns was meeting secretly in a tent at the border of Egypt and Israel with Egyptian General Salah Gohar and Josef Tekoah, representative of the Israel Government. I had spent an hour with Gohar and Love and guessed that the injustice done Burns could have originated in Gohar's mind. He impressed me as a person of strong, inflexible, analytical views.

I wrote to Arthur Sulzberger through the U.S. Embassy pouch and suggested that it would be a service to everyone, especially his readers, if a switch was arranged so that Love could be assigned to Israel and Gilroy to Egypt. Each of them would thus get an education on the other side of the line and achieve a greater degree of objectivity in his reporting. The

exchange of these two ace reporters took place at the Mandelbaum gate separating Jordan from Israel. In their new assignments they were met with finely honed hostility based on their recent past performances. In a short time they were on their respective ways again, many miles from the Middle East. Since that time I have left the management of *The New York Times* to its own executives.

Chapter XXI

Moshe Sharett, then Prime Minister, greeted me warmly the next day in his home. He, too, opened our conversation by asking me if Nasser knew that I was a Jew. His interest was shared by Walter Eytan, Director of the Foreign Office, and Yaacov Herzog, whom I had met ten years previously in Turkey with his father, the Chief Rabbi of Israel.

I repeated for them the same story I had told Ben-Gurion. Sharett seemed impressed, but he asked me, "Just what exactly did he think you were doing?"

"I told him that I was a Jew acting as a humanitarian."

"Did he believe that?" Sharett asked incredulously.

"Why not?" I said. "It's the truth."

"Extraordinary," he murmured.

In response to my questions Sharett explained the Gaza incident which Nasser had mentioned so many times. It was meant to be a minor retaliation for a series of Egyptian raids, he told me, but it had become more serious when a truck filled with Egyptian soldiers had run over an Israeli mine.

I told Sharett that Nasser insisted that the Gaza raid had forced him to defend his policy in his own military clique,

and that despite his firm hold on the situation, he was frightened by the possibility of an outbreak of full-scale war should another move be made by Israel along that border. I repeated my conviction that Nasser was indisputably at the helm. Still, if he were going to carry on peace talks with Israel, the negotiations would have to be under cover, quickly and quietly.

"You are the only one I know who has had any close contact with Nasser," Sharett said. "We must not let this chance slip through our fingers even if it is a slender reed. Will you return to Cairo at once? I'm going to report our conversation to the cabinet and I will want to see you immediately after the meeting. Could you then go to Cairo and make Nasser an informal proposal?"

His quick reaction took me by surprise. I was scheduled to leave the next evening for a meeting with Prime Minister Adnan Menderes in Ankara, but after a moment's consideration I told him, "If you give me something concrete to take back to Nasser, I'll rearrange my schedule. I'll go back to Cairo. But I must first report to my government and get permission from Washington."

Sharett was all business when we met the next day after his cabinet meeting. He outlined the background of the border difficulties and in meticulous terms laid out his proposal. I carefully took notes of everything he said.

The Gaza incident, he told me, was a misunderstanding and blown far out of its original proportions. Actually, he pointed out, the truck that had been wrecked was setting up an ambush. It was mere chance that had saved Israeli lives at the cost of the Egyptians.

In any event, it was just an isolated case in a series of exasperating events which were plaguing the Israeli settlers

along the border. There were infiltrations by Arabs practically every night, he told me. They murdered, laid mines in farm fields and blew up sections of Israel's hard-won irrigation system.

"It is obviously intolerable," Sharett went on. "How can Nasser really claim he wants peace and still allow these things to go on?"

"Maybe he is not aware of the extent of them," I interposed.

Sharett snorted. "There's not the slightest doubt that they're organized from the top. Some of the raiders have even been interrogated in the presence of UN officials. It is really impossible to deny that Nasser, or someone close to him, is responsible for the tension at Gaza. This bloodletting cannot go on indefinitely; we've lost twenty-two people since the Gaza incident he talks about so much. How many people know that?"

He then referred to a certain confidential "contact" between Nasser and himself that he wanted me to remind Nasser about. It revolved around two Israeli spies who had been caught in Egypt and although well-authorized sources close to Nasser had assured Sharett that they would not be prosecuted, they were, in fact, hanged.

"If Nasser understands that he owes us something for hanging those two spies," Sharett said, "let him set free the Israeli girl who was also caught and reduce the sentences of some of the others. We'll accept that as compensation for the two boys he hanged."

Getting back to a proposal to lay before Nasser, Sharett continued, "The real point is, just what does Nasser really want? I have the impression he doesn't know himself. Per-

haps he doesn't really have as much authority as we think." He looked at me questioningly.

I shook my head and once again expressed my opinion that Nasser was the man in charge. I couldn't see any serious change impending in Egypt.

"You may be right," Sharett shrugged. "We're not asking much. All that is required is for both sides to implement the armistice agreement we've both agreed to formally."

Sharett was downright eloquent on the economic advantages to both sides if peace could be arranged. "Nasser is losing more than thirty million dollars a year in the Israeli market on cotton business alone. We can give him technical assistance. We can help him with tourist traffic. He's losing millions in Suez Canal revenue by keeping our shipping out. He could slash his military budget and establish a land connection between Syria, Lebanon and Jordan. All he has to do is stop this military nonsense."

"What about the refugees?" I asked. "That's the toughest of all the problems."

Sharett looked at me wryly, almost sadly.

"My God, Hirschmann, people outside are always forgetting that we had to take into this tiny state the same number of refugees these enormous states in the Arab League are now refusing to do anything about. There's simply no room for them now in Israel."

He added that most of the Arab refugees, in all likelihood, would be willing to return only if Israel were wiped out, adding, "In that, of course, we can't oblige them."

He went on to say that Israel was vitally interested in having as many refugees as possible moved out of the Gaza Strip, adding, "If there's anything realistic in the project of the United Nations for resettling them in the Sinai Peninsula,

where they would be a godsend from Nasser's point of view, we would be very willing indeed to make a substantial contribution toward their resettlement. Here is evidence of our concrete desire to contribute toward the resettlement of these people and to the security of their future."

Sharett saw the Suez blockade as the main obstacle. He offered to send ships through under Egyptian flags if necessary. "But above all," he added, "let him put an end to this blockade and frustration, if he really wants peace."

After checking with our Ambassador, Edward A. Lawson, and arranging to cable a report on my mission to the State Department, I left Israel. I was authorized by Moshe Sharett to make Nasser an informal offer for a test period along the following lines:

1. Peace on the Gaza border, depending on a conciliatory approach on the UN plan to establish a buffer zone at the Kilo 95 marking.
2. An Israeli contribution toward the Sinai refugee resettlement project—not a mere expression of good will or a token amount, but a really substantial contribution to be interpreted, in Sharett's words, as the discharge of an obligation.
3. An agreement on the part of the Israeli Government to accept me as a liaison with Egypt.

This return to Egypt meant the abandonment of our trip to Turkey. But we agreed that the significance of what I might be able to accomplish overshadowed all other considerations. Anne would have to wait to see the scenes of my "cloak and dagger" days in Istanbul and Ankara during the war.

Our change in plans made it possible for us to attend Am-

bassador Lawson's Fourth of July reception at the Ramat Gan Hotel in Tel Aviv. Neither Anne nor I will ever forget it.

As we approached the hotel, the first cheering sight was the view of American and Israeli flags flapping briskly side by side in the Mediterranean breeze. Cars decorated with emblems and flags of governments all over the world were converging on the hotel. Anne, like all the other women present, was properly attired in the hat and gloves called for in the formal invitation. It was a sharp contrast to the khaki shorts and open-necked shirts of the Israeli military.

Suddenly the festive informality gave way to the solemnity of the occasion. We were brought to attention by the sounds of "The Star Spangled Banner." Old Glory fluttered in the artificial breeze stirred up by an oscillating electric fan. The Israeli musicians struggled through a strange rhythmic version of our anthem, never a simple piece to play and well nigh unsingable. But the spirit was there and it gained even greater zest when on completion they modulated into their own more familiar anthem, "Hatikva."

The music, the evident good will and the symbolism of the pairing of two nations, each with dearly earned independence and both dedicated to individual dignity, the promise of democracy, brought many of us to tears as we stood at attention. Dear Anne, mindful of her New England heritage and so sensitive to human reactions, tugged gently at my sleeve to attract my attention and whispered, "Seventeen seventy-six all over again."

Chapter XXII

En route to Cairo we made the necessary stop at Nicosia in Cyprus. On a courtesy call to our Consul, Raymond F. Courtney, I was greeted by an explosion which rocked the consulate, blowing out some of the doors and windows. It was a charming Cypriot way of expressing their displeasure with us for having allegedly sympathized with Britain's refusal to grant them self-rule.

At the Egyptian Consulate, where I had hurried to ask for a return visa, additional trouble set in. The Egyptian Consul was amazed and horrified by my request when he saw that I had just come from Israel. Even mention of Colonel Hatem's name didn't help. Then I remembered an autographed photograph Nasser had given me as a souvenir of our visit: it worked.

My second visit to Cairo was not as fruitful or satisfying as my first. Not only were Anne and I sadly stricken with the classic Middle East complaint, dysentery, in an exceedingly acute form, but all my hoped-for arrangements were delayed. My return coincided with the state visit of Pandit Nehru. This, of course, tied Nasser and all his officials into a knot for a few days. Then, just about everyone was hit with the

same illness that was plaguing me. It was pleasant to know it wasn't confined to Americans, but I was thoroughly annoyed when it became clear that I wasn't going to reach Nasser for several weeks.

During the next few days I had several meetings with our Ambassador, Henry Byroade, and reinforced my earlier estimate of him. I listened to all of his complaints of difficulty in dealing with Nasser and his repeated assertion that, "If the Israelis only wouldn't rock the boat, I might be able to settle things over here."

I had too much experience with the Middle East practice of wearing you down by making you wait interminably; it was time for me to set a deadline. I called Hatem to advise him of my decision to leave Egypt in forty-eight hours. To do this I had to reach him at his home where he was recovering from his bout with the bug. He was abject in his apologies and asked if I could wait a few more days. But very firmly I said, "Absolutely not."

He promised to speak to Nasser and, indeed, called back the next morning to ask if he could meet me at my hotel, the Semiramis. Nasser had held a meeting the night before, he told me. In view of the little time at my disposal they had decided to deal with me by means of a message through Hatem and a telephone call with Nasser.

Hatem finally came to see me at my hotel, barely twenty minutes before I would have to leave for the airport. He rushed into the lobby where I stood with Anne, surrounded by luggage and awaiting our chauffeur. He was almost furtive in his desire to make our meeting look casual. In fact, he insisted that we move several times to prevent our being overheard by agents lurking behind the potted palms.

Nasser's answer to my memorandum was simple and dis-

appointing. The only positive reply was a promise to try to keep things quiet along the Gaza border. And this, Hatem insisted, would probably be impossible since Ben-Gurion, as he put it, had aroused the Israelis to aggressive action in that area.

I may have been guilty of over-optimism, carried away by my desire to be a peacemaker. There were factors in my conversations on both sides of the line that gave me the right to be sanguine about the possibility of accommodations by Israel and Egypt. But the facts of history speak louder than the soft and beguiling words of wishful thinking.

Scarcely a month after my talks with Nasser, the Fedayeen raids began. These were allegedly Arab refugees from Palestine armed and trained in the Gaza Strip by the Egyptians for nightly commando border incursions. In August, 1955, an official Egyptian communiqué called them ". . . heroes, the disciples of Pharaoh and the sons of Islam," and it described their mission as the cleansing of Palestine. The communiqué concluded with this direct statement: "There will be no peace on Israel's border because we demand vengeance, and vengeance is Israel's death."

These nightly attacks grew in efficiency and intensity with a terrible toll in lives and destruction. According to Israeli sources, in the months that followed which led to formal military action by Israeli forces in the Sinai Peninsula at the end of October, 1956, Fedayeen raids resulted in 101 Israeli deaths and 364 wounded. Major General E. L. M. Burns, United Nations Chief of Staff, stated unequivocally that based on the number and nature of these acts, he assumed they were authorized by Egyptian authorities and that "I consider that if Egypt has ordered these Fedayeen raids she has now put herself in the position of the aggressor."

Nevertheless, under the pressure of the United States and the Soviet Union acting in unique unison, the United Nations did not accept the testimony of their own man in the field and condemned Israel as well as Great Britain and France, who had acted simultaneously to recapture the Suez Canal which had been seized by Nasser. Ironically Nasser, whose power in Egypt and the Arab world had been on the wane, emerged stronger than ever—a victory despite defeat in the field of battle.

Another factor which had militated against the success of my mission and which bears mention was the attitude of Henry Byroade, our Ambassador in Cairo. As I was leaving Cairo he was effusive in his praise of my activity. He even expressed his amazement at my success with Nasser. On my return to Washington, however, I found that his reports took the opposite tack, complaining of my "interference." Happily George Allen, head of the Middle East desk, did not share his opinion, but my immediate usefulness in the area was certainly not enhanced by this uncalled-for and unilateral condemnation.

It must also be said that the co-operative attitude of Moshe Sharett did not meet with universal approval among his fellow Israelis. Ben-Gurion, for one, was convinced that the only hope for Israel at that time was to circumvent Nasser rather than to deal with him. Seen in the light of ensuing events, his assessment of the situation was probably correct. I would prefer to think of what might have been had my mission been successful.

While on a speaking tour of the Southern states in November, 1954, a telephone call from my sister Etta in Baltimore reached me at my hotel in Birmingham. My father, eighty-

five years old, was failing rapidly and he had asked for me.

Seated nervously on the first plane out, I mused over the change in our relationship that had grown in the churning years since I first left home. The old hostility based on my rebelliousness had gone. The resentment of what I thought had been parental tyranny and penuriousness had gradually distilled into warm compassion and understanding. Perhaps of greater importance, each of us had come to respect deeply the desires and achievements of the other.

A waiting taxi sped me to my father's house, and once arrived I literally leaped out to rush to his apartment, going straight to his bedside without stopping to shed my overcoat.

These were my father's last hours and he knew it. But even then he had lost none of his dignity or the fastidiousness that had been his habit all his life. The blood seemed drained out of his drawn face, but his hair was neatly combed, his face cleanly shaved and I could see that his nails had only recently been manicured.

Father greeted me with a wan smile and with some effort reached out in my direction. I assumed it was to shake my hand, but, instead, he grasped the lapel of my overcoat. He held it between his thumb and forefinger, rubbing it gently as if to appraise the texture of the rare quality vicuna I was wearing—a relic of my days at Saks Fifth Avenue. It was a gesture I had seen him perform hundreds of times, a throwback to his apprenticeship in the textile industry in Riga so many years earlier.

The great inner strength of the man. Only shortly before, on one of my previous visits, he had insisted upon rising from his bed and shaving himself before greeting me in his living room. Now, his tired eyes twinkling as almost lovingly

he fingered my lapel, he was again demonstrating his alertness, his skill.

Then, with the private smile of approbation I remember from my early childhood, he looked into my eyes and still caressing my coat whispered, "Wonderful . . . wonderful." I prefer to believe that this final approval was meant for me.

Chapter XXIII

On March 6, 1956, another bastion of colonialism in North Africa fell before the growing thrust of nationalism. Under the leadership of Sultan Ben Youssef, Morrocan rebels ended a French protectorate that had controlled the country since before World War I, and Morocco became an independent sovereign nation.

The official proclamation of Moroccan independence set loose a wave of round-the-clock celebrations that defied control even by their own authorities. Frenchmen who had lived in Casablanca and other cities for many years were forced to go into hiding. Other foreigners were warned by Moroccan officials to keep under cover. The attendant hysteria with its looting and vandalism was the background for my arrival in Casablanca on another errand of rescue.

I had gone there at the request of Herbert A. Friedman, executive vice-president of the United Jewish Appeal, who had initiated an intensive drive to rescue the troubled Jews of Morocco. Trapped in an imbroglio in which they were not directly involved, the Jewish citizens were nevertheless its innocent victims. My first act was to ignore the warnings of

police officials and to venture into the city's streets to see for myself the depredations of the mob. It wasn't necessary for me to stray too far from my hotel. Even in my brief excursion I witnessed a sufficient display of violence and chaos to convince me of the danger of my position.

The next day I managed to move about more freely and I found the Jewish population in Casablanca suffering absolute degradation, some of the people actually living in caves. Even those in the mellah (ghetto), who worked as craftsmen and had little shops, were living at the lowest level of an archaic feudal society.

The American Joint Distribution Committee was performing brilliantly in its health centers where ill-fed and sickly Moroccan Jews were being restored to health and prepared for transport by the Jewish Agency from North Africa to Marseilles and back across the Mediterranean to Haifa, a circuitous route made necessary by Arab restrictions.

The centuries-old Jewish community was threatened by the aroused Moslems, delirious with their new-found freedom and fomented by propaganda which Nasser had candidly admitted to me emanated from Cairo. The defenseless Jews were literally panic-stricken and large scale excesses similar to Nazi depredations seemed imminent.

In the midst of this anarchy, some eight hundred Moroccan Jews had been loaded aboard a ship to make the first leg of their trip to Israel. But in the confusion the necessary exit visas were missing, and there was no one among the Moors now in authority to issue them.

A midnight telephone call sent me rushing to the docks, where I immediately found myself reliving the frenetic days of my service in Turkey. It was a dismal, cold, rainy night and the poor souls crammed into every cranny of the crowded

ship had no inkling that the boat might not leave port. The Jewish Agency had made a strenuous effort not to break up families; in some cases three generations marched up the gangplank, trying to protect each other from the rain and the cold. Their family solidarity seemed to give them strength, and with the prospect before them of a free life in Israel, they made feeble attempts to sing.

I was able to enlist the sympathetic resourcefulness of William Porter, the United States Consul General in Rabat, and we were eventually able to clear the ship. Porter's quick action and his constructive point of view frankly expressed in subsequent conversations at the embassy came as a refreshing breeze in this troubled area.

Before returning to the States, I made an intensive survey of conditions in Rabat and Marrakesh as well as in the smaller communities, where I found the Jews in an even lower level of degradation. In my reports, which were widely published in American newspapers, I pressed for the most urgent speed in getting boatloads out of Morocco. All indications pointed to a new policy of containing the Jewish population inside the country. It wasn't long before the exit doors out of Morocco were barred. Since then they have alternately been opened and shut, depending upon political exigencies.

Later that year, in December, I found myself in Vienna on a similar mission, but one complicated by power politics and mass disillusionment occasioned by the ineptness of United States policy laid down by our Secretary of State. Emboldened by propaganda piped through the Iron Curtain by the Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, the youth of Hungary had erupted in revolt against their Soviet masters. Misled by encouraging messages, they poured across the border into Austria expecting welcoming committees, even

military assistance. Instead they found a sympathetic American Ambassador, Llewellyn E. Thompson, frustrated by orders from Secretary Dulles not to give overt assistance to the escapees.

It was a week before Christmas when I got to Vienna and found Ambassador Thompson a picture of despair and fatigue. Hamstrung by his orders from his chief, John Foster Dulles, this exceptionally able foreign officer, soon to become Ambassador to Moscow, was working in close harmony with several private organizations to find temporary housing and protection for the Hungarian refugees. He accorded especially high praise to the Quakers, the Red Cross, the Joint Distribution Committee and the International Rescue Committee. Thompson was frank in stating that without these groups the already bad situation would have deteriorated into chaos.

I went to the border and saw for myself the waves of Hungarians coming over in every conceivable type of vehicle as well as on foot. Many of them carted their belongings in baby carriages, carrying their youngsters and in some cases crippled parents in their arms. Their bitterness when they arrived was starkly tragic; "betrayal" was a word heard too often and not without validity.

Austria, a small country only recently relieved of the burden of four-power occupation, coped heroically with the influx of thousands of Hungarians. The Scandinavian countries took the lead that should have been ours in accepting refugees and spread their absorption throughout Western Europe. It took a special Act of Congress before we were able to adjust our quotas to admit a good number of these victims of oppression and double talk. Our politicians have bewailed in eloquent terms the cruelty with which the Soviet

army crushed the heroic Hungarian revolt, but our own performance in that debacle is not too honorable.

Because of my previous experience, I was closest to the Joint Distribution Committee among the organizations in the field. Led by that veteran publicist and humanitarian, Samuel Jaffe, they again demonstrated their ability to apply their technical and spiritual resources overnight to meet large-scale human emergencies. Ambassador Thompson was unstinting in his praise. "Without the JDC, another segment of the Jewish population would have been trapped, starved and lost," he told me.

On returning to the United States I was interviewed on the radio—an opportunity to expose the anomaly of our position. After we had urged people behind the Iron Curtain to throw off the yoke of their Communist oppressors I insisted that we had shirked our moral responsibility to carry through with more than words of enticement. I described how these first valiant soldiers who risked their lives for freedom found a cold shoulder when they appeared at our doors.

My experiences in Morocco and Austria again impressed me with the wisdom of the open door policy of Ben-Gurion and his fellow Israeli leaders. Conversely, it reinforced my belief that to insure Israel's role as a haven, a formula must be found for peace in the Middle East. And the crux of this solution, I was convinced, was the amelioration of the Palestine refugee problem. But I was to make another sudden change in my business career before I would be in a position to bring the benefit of my experience and the zeal of my convictions to bear on that vexing stalemate.

In 1958 I entered the banking business. A group of businessmen had bought control of the Gotham Bank in New York City and elected me Chairman of the Board. I hesitate

to list my credentials for this position, but it was a challenge and I could not help but reflect on the fate which had swung me full circle from advertising and merchandising into the very business that my father had embraced in his later years. How proud, if not dumfounded, he would have been to learn of my emergence into the banking field and my position as Chairman of the Board of a New York bank. Among my fellow directors was a Texas oil expert, Julien B. Adoue, Jr., who had spent many years in the Middle East where he had built pipelines and operated oil concessions. Adoue introduced me to his friend, Paul Ryan, the former president of the National Refining Company, and a walking encyclopedia of the oil industry. I learned from Ryan that the major American oil companies operating in the Middle East were acutely aware that the refugee problem was a sore point in the current Arab-Israeli conflict and that this tinderbox could blow up their billions of dollars of investment in the richest and most profitable business in the world. Ryan led me to Gordon W. Reed, Chairman of the Texas Gulf Producing Company, and to other leading oilmen who helped further my education in their special world.

They revealed to me that explorations in Libya were bringing in gushers which could possibly match Saudi Arabia and Kuwait in their productivity. The leading oil companies of the world were converging upon Libya, pouring hundreds of millions of dollars into leases and rights in a vast wasteland extending over a thousand miles along the Mediterranean coast of North Africa.

Libya, a former Italian colony, the scene of Rommel's advances and retreats across the desert in World War II, had been one of the poorest countries in the world. Its population, 1.2 million people, is largely organized along tribal lines and

is made up mostly of nomads and seminomads. Suddenly tremendous wealth was found under their feet, but the country suffered from a serious lack of technically trained labor of any description. There were roads to be built, airfields and seaports. They needed mechanics to maintain equipment ranging from trucks to the complex machinery of the modern oil industry.

As the oilmen described this problem, I envisioned the utilization of the young Arabs languishing in the camps in the neighboring countries. Instead of a constant threat to peace and a criminal waste of manpower, with training they could make a positive contribution to the economic development of the area.

Excited by the possibilities of this concept, Ryan and I invited a group of oilmen to an informal meeting and put the question to them directly. Would the oil companies contribute toward training these young people in the skills they needed so badly, create a labor pool for their own purposes and thereby help stabilize the Middle East economy in their own enlightened self-interest?

Their reaction was affirmative. But they were quick to express their reservations based on the political hazards involved in dealing with any phase of the refugee problem. Not discouraged, I carried on my investigations, which began to crystallize into a cohesive program. It was clear to me that only a supragovernmental agency could undertake the complexity of training thousands of young people, could organize the logistics of their employment and provide them with "passports" to their new jobs. This was a task for the United Nations.

Specifically, my plan belonged in the purview of UNRWA, the United Nations Relief and Works Agency, the body cre-

ated by the UN to administer the Palestine refugee camps. The essential difference between the agency and the old UNRRA is indicated in the word "Works"—the W in its abbreviated title. This implied the creation of the means by which the refugees were to become self-supporting. I gathered my facts, my figures and my enthusiasm and went to see Molly Flynn.

Molly had been an associate in my days as Inspector General of UNRRA. A charming and capable person, she had been appointed liaison officer between the director of UNRWA and Dag Hammarskjöld, Secretary General of the United Nations. I explained my plan to her in briefest terms, noting that it could relieve the member countries of a portion of the financial burden, which would be assumed by the oil companies. I reminded her that technical training of refugees was in keeping with the original aims of UNRWA. Molly arranged for me to meet with Dr. John H. Davis, who had just succeeded Henry Labouisse as UNRWA Director.

A professor at the Harvard School of Business and a former Assistant Secretary of Agriculture, Dr. Davis was just coming to grips with the complexities of his new assignment. I could not have approached him at a more propitious time.

An able man with a realistic grasp of the problems facing him, he expressed his belief to me that an improvement in the economic condition of the area was a prerequisite for stability in the Middle East. "If we can accelerate the pace of economic and industrial development of the Arab countries, there lies our best hope," he said to me in his office at the United Nations. He looked to vocational training as a practical means for many refugees to become self-sustaining. His budget, however, provided thirteen cents a day for the

feeding of the refugees, but not one cent for the training of the sort he envisaged.

Davis expressed great interest in my formula for the participation of the oil companies in the underwriting of the costs of vocational schooling. I told him of my exploratory talks with Paul Ryan and of the encouragement we had received from David Shepard, Vice-President of the Standard Oil Company of New Jersey, and John C. Case, former Director and Vice-President of Socony Mobil Oil Company, Inc. I made it absolutely clear that my one interest was to create a condition which would generate peace and stability, essential to all the people in the Middle East—Arab, Jew and Christian.

I also indicated to Dr. Davis that there was a possibility of getting financial support for the technical schools from our government. The President had a hundred million dollar emergency fund and with the help of Dean Francis B. Sayre, Jr. of Washington Cathedral, I thought it could spare a half million dollars for this worthwhile purpose. In fact, I promised to go to Washington to try to dig into this source.

Finally, by way of a concrete proposal for immediate action, I offered to go to the Arab countries at my own expense to make a study of refugee conditions and their potential as a labor force. I was certain that conditions varied markedly from country to country, and I wanted to see for myself the one experimental training school operating in Kalandia, Jordan. Further, it was important that I make a factual report to the oil companies as well as to the State Department.

Davis, in turn, invited me to make this survey. He was helpful in arranging for visas which made it possible for me

to leave the States in May, 1960, to make a tour of refugee camps in Lebanon, Syria and Jordan.

Before I left, Parker T. Hart, in charge of refugee matters on the Middle East desk of the State Department, asked me to make a report on my findings for the Department.

Beirut is the site of UNRWA headquarters, the nerve center from which orders and directives from Dr. Davis' staff emanate to its twelve thousand employees in Lebanon, Egypt, Syria and Jordan. I was met at the airport by Harry Howard, State Department liaison with UNRWA for refugees, who had been instructed to assist me in my study and report to be submitted to Washington. Howard, an historian and authority on the Middle East proved indispensable in his help, mapping a tour for me which would take me, via UNRWA's airplane and an embassy automobile, to the Arab capitals. Dr. Davis spent many hours with me and paved the way for the full co-operation of his staff in each of the countries.

There were ninety thousand men, women and children living in refugee camps in Lebanon. I inspected some of these establishments which, for convenience, I classified as good, medium and poor. The poorest of these brought back vivid memories of Germany in 1946.

The artificial life which homeless people live is a desolate spectacle, no matter their origin or shift of locale. This is equally true of Arabs, Jews, Armenians, Koreans, or any of the millions of stateless European and Asiatic peoples. Even in the worst camps refugees were living far better and longer than their counterparts I had seen in the squalor of some villages in Egypt.

My visit to Lebanon coincided with its national elections.

Polling was held on three successive Sundays. To offset the threat of violence, not uncommon in Arab elections, the Lebanese Army was shifted each week to cover the area where voting was to take place. Americans were warned to stay off the roads during this period, but my time was limited and I was eager to visit my friend Bob Reams, who was now Consul General in Damascus, Syria. Finally arrangements were made for me to go there on a Saturday in the embassy car decorated with two American flags hung like semaphores for my protection.

"Don't worry, Ira," they told me at the embassy. "You have our best chauffeur and he has a gun." Somehow that last phrase did not have the intended comforting effect.

It was a fifty-five mile trip on a winding road that twisted up and down the foothills and mountains that ring the little country. We passed the Cedars of Lebanon, some of which were said to be fourteen thousand years old. Along the way we stopped at the incomparable ruins of Balbek—a thrilling vestige of unbelievable antiquity. Even the incessant chatter of the "best chauffeur" did not diminish the beauty of the Lebanese countryside and the dramatic spectacle of Mount Sinai.

As we drove through the hills of Lebanon, I saw one gigantic mansion after another sitting on the hilltops, each with a stunning view of the Mediterranean. They shone in their newness, and it was obvious to me that they had never been lived in. In reply to my questions, the chauffeur told me that they belonged to sheiks from Saudi Arabia who had built them as a way of caching their vast oil fortunes for a "rainy day." What a shameful waste, I thought, and it struck home as we passed each palace, "Does anyone really enjoy the right to such waste?"

Like most former Palestinians I met in Lebanon, the chauffeur boasted of his origin and kept repeating his intention of returning to Israel to kill his quota of Jews. I finally interrupted him with, "You know you can get killed doing that." He veered dangerously to the side of the road and exclaimed, "I never thought of that." The naïveté with which these people continued to repeat, parrotlike, these childish imprecations was amazing. It sounded almost like the dire threats that are exchanged between warring factions in the nursery.

The Palestinian refugees in Lebanon occupy a peculiar position. My chauffeur was typical. They are considered the sophisticates of the Arab world, having picked up some of the polish of the British and the efficiency of the Jews. Many of their businessmen have pre-empted the leadership of their Lebanese counterparts—no mean achievement—in their own back yard, causing not a little friction. One shrewd Lebanese woman, told me at lunch, "The Jews made the Palestinians. What was the country really before the Jews came in numbers? The Palestinians made their fortunes dealing with the Jews." She insisted that the more important businessmen who had lost their property by fleeing the country now hoped to get a windfall in reparations, adding, "But they really do not expect to go back." She asked me not to use her name, but assured me that the reality of Israel is slowly becoming accepted in Lebanon, despite the fact that no one dares admit it publicly.

The warm reception waiting for me at the Damascus home of Bob Reams was a flashback to our original meeting in Yugoslavia in 1949 where I had conferred with Marshal Tito. It was a wonderful and invigorating reunion.

I was bursting to know Bob's opinion on the durability of

the Cairo-Damascus union under the banner of the United Arab Republic and barely gave them time to welcome me before I started firing questions. In fact I looked to Reams' acute and prescient political acumen for many of my answers to the refugee problem.

He turned to Dotty, his wife, and said, "Take Ira downtown and let him see for himself." We drove to the center of the city where decorations were still hanging after the reception and parade in Nasser's honor during his visit to Damascus the previous week. Dotty pointed to two gigantic papiér-maché hands, clasped in a handshake to form an arch over the entrance to the main thoroughfare. Significantly, one hand was white, representing Syria; the other, a dirty dark brown in color, was Egypt. No accident, this was indicative of the Syrians' belief that they are vastly superior to the Egyptians, whom they consider to be a mongrel race, largely negroid. They let no opportunity pass to remind their people and the Egyptians of this distinction.

On our return Reams expounded his theories on the marriage of convenience between the Syrians and the Egyptians. He piled one piece of sometimes subtle but always telling evidence upon another. His opinion was that a break could come, engineered by the Syrians, in a year to eighteen months. Fifteen months later, in August, 1961, the Syrians did engineer a bloodless coup and within weeks returned to the United Nations as an independent, sovereign power.

After the visit to Damascus, I flew to Amman, capital of Jordan. A poor country, with little or no indigenous economic resources, Jordan is still in my opinion the key to maintaining equilibrium in the Middle East.

To see Jerusalem from the Arab side of the Jordan was a strangely revealing experience for me. Viewing Israeli Jeru-

salem from Ramalla, a high point overlooking the Holy City, I felt the startling contrast between its modernity, its bustling activity, and the torpidity and archaism of the old Arab city in the foreground. And, in the no-man's-land that lies between the two sectors, seen from a closer vantage point than is possible from the Israeli side, stand the old buildings of the Hebrew University and Hadassah Hospital, idle, rotting in disuse, but monuments to the pioneers of an earlier Palestine.

At a reception for King Hussein in the garden of Ambassador Sheldon T. Mills' home in Amman, I listened to a cross section of the prevailing opinions of the country's leaders and those of the resident diplomatic corps. Among those who attended were Prime Minister Hazza El Majali, Foreign Minister Mousa Nasser, British Ambassador Sir Charles Johnston and other political and military leaders. There I heard hints of "peace feelers" vaguely expressed which I tried to encourage with tiptoe discretion. The return of some refugees to Palestine and a change of geography were mentioned. I said that any basis for negotiations should be pursued. They seemed to center all the blame for "rigidity" on Ben-Gurion and indicated that they believed they might be able to come to terms with a younger regime.

At one point in the evening I had a pleasantly informal and discreet conversation with the Prime Minister. Ever the optimist, I decided to broach openly, albeit delicately, the possibility of peace between Jordan and Israel. Even had he reacted positively to my tentative diplomatic approach, it wouldn't have mattered much. Scarcely two months later Majali was killed by a bomb apparently meant also for his king. Indeed, the attempted assassinations, at least three since 1958, were a popular subject for discussion in Jordan.

I did not hear one expression of what might be construed as a realistic appraisal of Israel. The Jordanian attitude is to watch the booming progress over the border and whine petulantly in envy. It is ironic that such a backward state, kept alive by huge subventions from the United States and Great Britain, should hold such an important and strategic position. But the simple fact is that Jordan, with its heroic little king, is the essential buffer between the ambitious designs of Gamal Nasser on one side and Abd El-Karim Kassem on the other.

The guide assigned to me was a former Armenian who was fully informed even to the point of details about my attendance at the party for King Hussein the night before. In fact, he hinted that I should not be seen too frequently in the presence of the little king. "You know we have missed him three or four times in recent months," he said casually. "Our aim cannot continue to be that bad." The next day I tried to press him for more detailed information about his target. All that I could get from him was that he was a member of one of several rebel organizations in Jordan.

I was particularly interested in the East Gore Water project being constructed under the resourceful direction of Norman Burns, then Director of Point IV, now President of the American University in Beirut. A by-product of Eric Johnston's aborted plan to irrigate the upper Jordan Valley, it was well under way. On completion it will provide fertile farmland for thousands of Jordanians—a brilliant example of long, arduous and patient collaboration between the Point IV representatives and the Jordanians.

The trip down to the Dead Sea and up the winding Judean hills past the narrow muddy Jordan to the pilot vocational school in Kalandia, near Jordan-Jerusalem, revealed the

bone-dry sand and rock that dominated the area. Few signs of cultivation, or habitation for that matter, were in evidence.

The school itself was the one constructive thing I saw in my tour of the refugee camps. It clearly demonstrated that the young refugees not only could learn but yearned to be taught the skills required in the area. This was the trial horse for Dr. Davis' training program, and it augured well for the program's expansion. Davis estimated that four million dollars would be needed to build and staff ten similar centers. In my report I expressed my certitude that Dr. Davis' enthusiasm and his persuasive eloquence would enlist the necessary financial support. As this is written, the program is well under way, with at least nine schools in operation, and I am confident that the funds will be available for as many more.

The plan calls for 2,000 scholarships at $500 each. The American oil companies, the oil producing countries, principally Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, the Vatican, West Germany, England, Holland and the United States all have committed themselves to appreciable contributions. This new trickle of oil money along with government and private agency contributions is now flowing for the first time to educate Arabs toward useful occupations, a happy augury.

My visit to the Vocational Training School at Kalandia gave me among other things an interesting insight into another Arab point of view. Henry Knezevitch, a former Yugoslav, the head of the school, told me that he had been for thirty years the next-door neighbor in Jerusalem of Ben-Zvi, Israel's President. He once considered Ben-Zvi his closest friend and they still exchange letters through some underground channel. But Knezevitch is bitter: "Why did the British permit the Jewish Agency to exist and progress right

under their noses?" he asks. "That was the beginning of the end."

Summing up my impressions before making my formal report, I made a conscious effort not to permit humanitarian considerations to color my conclusions. While it is true that my sympathy for uprooted people lies at the bottom of all my activity in this field, I felt it necessary to regard the problems of the Arab refugees in their broader context as an international social problem. I saw the immediate necessity of creating an atmosphere in which political accommodation could grow naturally and unobtrusively out of economic improvement in the area. This meant to me that attention must first be given the economic questions, and, to that end, we must avoid the common mistake of lumping all the refugees into one mass. What had been conjecture before I made the trip had hardened into fact. I was now irrevocably convinced that the condition and status of the Arab refugees in each country differed markedly from the others and would have to be dealt with accordingly.

In Lebanon, a small country enjoying an expanding prosperity, their 110,000 refugees could be absorbed almost overnight were it not for a significant local political hurdle—and a tough one to clear. Political unrest in Lebanon is an old story predating by generations the existence of Israel and the resulting refugee problem. It is based on the difference between the Christian and Moslem populations. For, while they are all Arabs, the governing group in Lebanon at the moment is Christian. For them to accept as citizens 100,000 or more Moslem refugees would be to swing the balance dangerously in a political sense—perhaps suicidally.

An oddity in Lebanon is the existence of a self-contained

and self-sufficient Jewish community of some 5,000. These businessmen, tradesmen, bankers even have their own newspaper. The Lebanese government describes them as Lebanese of Jewish faith and not Zionists, insisting that their opposition is not to Jews as such, but to the state of Israel.

According to foreign experts I interviewed in Syria, that country could also absorb its 120,000 refugees easily despite government claims that to do so would place an unbearable strain on their economy. But the same rivalry for leadership among Arab nations, which causes them to vie in the vehemence of their expressions of hatred for Israel, has forced the refugees into the unhappy position of being pawns in their political warfare. It must be remembered that the millions of dollars being spent by UNRWA in Syria as in the other "host" nations is a source of revenue. Aside from buying foodstuffs and equipment, UNRWA provides educational and health facilities on a high level heretofore unknown in many of these areas. With the disappearance of the refugee camps it is feared that these benefits would be lost.

The Jordanian decision to accept a half million refugees as citizens is a major point of difference from the other Arab countries. For, in so doing, they have created a solid political bloc which uses hate as its rallying cry. This lends even greater importance to the necessity of strengthening King Hussein's position as the leader of his country, since these new citizens are markedly susceptible to demagogic propaganda from outside the country. Nasser knows this, hence the repeated attempts at Hussein's assassination. We know it, hence the thirty and forty million dollar subventions. Convinced as I am that this tiny prefabricated kingdom provides a pivotal balance in this area, I feel that this aspect of our

Middle East policy should be more clearly understood and given our undeviating support.

As a result of my earlier trips to Egypt, I was convinced that there is little or no chance of rehabilitation in the Gaza Strip area—where the refugees are hemmed in by Egyptian decree and consigned to idle brooding. Unemployment is probably higher there than anywhere else in the world. Any solution having the elements of permanence, such as the United Nations aborted plan for resettling refugees on the Sinai Peninsula, is resisted by the Egyptian Government.

I wrote my report to the State Department at the American Embassy in Beirut and before leaving the Middle East, I handed a draft to Dr. Davis. His reaction was to appoint me as a consultant to UNRWA. I was assigned an office at the UN Secretariat adjoining Dr. Davis' and continued to work toward ridding the world of this "running sore" on the basis of productive, positive action for its economic uplift.

Chapter XXIV

The Arab refugee problem is now fourteen years old. It is doubtful if any issue in recent years has been the subject of so many studies by independent voluntary agencies as well as UNRWA and interested governments. By now we know that additional surveys will not give us the answer. Nor can I see any benefits to be derived from polemics at the United Nations with the inevitable recriminations. The time is past for exchanges of blame for the origin of this grave impasse; we must look to the future.

Along with many others concerned with the problem, I am motivated only by a sincere desire to see an end to it. It would be nonsense for me to conceal my interest in the consolidation of Israel's sovereignty and security as a free society in the Middle East. But the bigger picture, of which Israel is an inseparable part, is the essential stabilization of the entire Middle East. I am absolutely convinced that the economic security of Israel is tied to the economic viability of the Arab states. I am equally convinced that knowledgeable Arabs recognize the benefits their countries could derive from access to Israel's modern scientific knowledge and

industrial know-how as well as their well-developed health and welfare apparatus.

UNRWA performed a massive task of rescue and rehabilitation in its camps. But the acute stage of the refugee problem is behind us. In the camps that I inspected in 1960 and in reports by journalists as well as UNRWA representatives, there is a proud record of improvement in health standards, housing, and the continuing battle against illiteracy. The first big job is done.

The next pressing phase is to seek ways to prevent the refugee problem from slipping into a chronic condition—humanly degrading, fruitless and expensive. The refugees cannot and must not continue indefinitely as charges of the international community. Since 1949 the cost to the United States alone of maintaining the UNRWA camps has passed the $300,000,000 mark.

The initial success of the first Vocational Training Schools in the refugee camps is, to my mind, the first practical opening toward some measure of self-sustenance for the thirty thousand young men and women who grow to maturity each year in the camps. It has now been proved that these young people can be converted from a world liability to an asset. Nor can the importance of the schools be measured solely in terms of the number of students themselves. By 1963, twenty-five hundred of them are expected to graduate. The record shows that each trained worker will take with him an average of six people, his family, when he leaves the UNRWA relief rolls.

Armed with information gained from this fruitful pilot test and reinforced by signs of improvement in the economy of the Middle East, I feel that we have reason to hope for future peace. The time is ripe for those of us who seek this

peace, notably the United States, to take the initiative, view the problem in the focus of the area as a whole and come to grips with it just as we did, with sublime and historic vision, in the Marshall Plan which rescued Europe and planted the seed for the present prodigious prosperity on that continent.

One hard fact, too seldom realistically seen, is that the Arab states, with some 1,200,000 square miles, comprise potentially one of the richest areas in the world. This territory possesses 53.46 per cent of the world's oil reserves, a plenitude of fertile land, ample water resources, natural gas and other chemicals in abundance and an agricultural potential which could convert it into one of the breadbaskets of the world. Much of the land is unoccupied, a large part underdeveloped. A number of the Arab states require additional population, an indispensable factor in developing their great natural wealth.

In 1960 alone a billion dollars in oil royalties was earned by four countries. Of this huge return, 95 per cent was shared by Iraq, Kuwait and Saudi Arabia, with a total population under nine million, living in an area of more than 600,000 square miles. With the discovery of a number of new fields in Saudi Arabia and Kuwait and with the still unmeasured capacity of Libya, this figure promises to rise to new dramatic heights. And the experts tell us that only 1 per cent of the oil potential of the Middle East is as yet being exploited.

A broad-gauged economic concept based on mutual assistance could lift the entire area into a new era of construction and independence. Efficient exploitation of its natural wealth will give the life force needed to orient the Arab people toward higher standards and nobler aspirations. In this quest Israel should be called on to contribute its scientific

knowledge and technical skills. The value of peace can be measured only in terms of human development.

Recent history points the way. We have seen the results derived from the massive infusions of economic plasma through the Marshall Plan. We have seen the European Economic Community, almost overnight, erase ancient antipathies and centuries-old suspicions among European nations with the manifest wisdom of mutual assistance. Political hatreds have been buried and fear-built fences broken down by co-operation based on shared needs and reciprocal benefits.

It is time for the nations of the Middle East to prove their maturity as sovereign states by joining, as the European nations have, in economic co-operation. Such a joint venture will permit them to exploit their own economic resources for their own best purposes. With the first fruits of this endeavor, the insecurity that breeds fear and hatred will begin to disappear. Not only will the futile vendetta against Israel come to a halt, but the old rivalries and jealousies that have wracked the Arab nations themselves will dwindle and eventually vanish.

I propose that the United States accept the responsibility of leadership in dispelling the fog that shrouds the Middle East, blurring clear vision of the actual facts and blunting all earlier efforts to achieve accommodations for peace. Surely we know by now that the way to the future cannot be purchased with huge outlays of money to keep a static displaced population alive. It is still costing us $23,000,000 a year to learn that charity is no substitute for intelligent planning.

Let us take the Middle East controversies, especially the refugee problem, out of the narrow recriminatory, political context of the past: this is the time for action on a monu-

mental scale. We must face this challenge boldly and imaginatively so that the present degrading human reality can be translated into future uplifting opportunity. Let us begin by:

(a) Establishing a Resources Development Commission, subsidized by international funds from the oil companies, oil-producing countries, the Western Governments and the World Bank.

(b) Authorizing this Commission to carry out the development of the natural resources of the Arab countries for the benefit of indigenous populations, the Arab refugees and the region as a whole.

(c) Requesting Israel to make a fair contribution to this fund.

(d) Inviting a fair share of the RDF (Resources Development Fund) from the large oil royalties. Latest figures in the Middle East countries show that 5,844,400 barrels of oil were produced per day, as an average, in February 1962. On the basis of a 2½ cent contribution from the barrelhead price by the countries and companies, or a total of 5 cents, it is estimated that this would come to $105,200,000 a year. This fund should be put into the hands of an international agency for long-range planning to provide indigenous means for the self-sustaining development of the Middle East countries in industry and agriculture.*

* This formula was originated, I am told, by Paul Ryan in consultation with other oil experts following the crisis in Lebanon in 1958 which brought United States Marines to its shores. The principle of contributions from the oil-producing countries and oil-producing companies toward a Middle East Economic Authority was given serious consideration by the Eisenhower Administration and referred to obliquely in President Eisenhower's speech at the United Nations on August 13 of that year, but it never got off the ground.

(e) Making this a direct, firm public proffer to the Arab states. The benefits are so obvious it seems unbelievable that their promise would be sacrificed to political expediency. Obviously such a program can only be implemented with the consent of the Arab governments. That consent will be the test of the sincerity of their professed desire to lead their people into the twentieth century.

The Arabs have every good reason to consider and embrace such a plan. In effect their own money from oil production will be returned to them in terms of creative projects and expanding economy. None of it will go out of the Arab areas. Notably, the money will be doubled by the oil industries' contribution which will mean a new flow and distribution of funds for lifting their economy, industry and social position off dead center.

This positive approach, taking into consideration the known sensitiveness of the Arabs, should go far to erase the traditional rejection of Western influence in the Middle East. If put into effect, this plan will clearly demonstrate that the United States, guilty in Arab eyes as a "godfather to Israel," is prepared to invest enormous sums of money as well as other forms of assistance to strengthen their society where help is most needed—on the human level, the *fellaheen* who have suffered for centuries under feudalism and colonial rule.

In my report to the State Department after visiting the refugee camps in May, 1960, I wrote: "On the scene in Beirut, one can perceive in these various training programs the acceptance in principle and the beginnings of solutions that must inevitably open up. The improved economy and

health of the new Arab generation should guarantee this. Efforts, no matter how well-meaning, to attempt to superimpose a settlement of the problem from inside or outside in the glare of world-wide publicity and audiences will not only fail at this time but will create a new rigidity on both sides."

I was pleased to note that in a study of the refugee problem, made for the Palestine Conciliation Commission in the summer of 1961, Dr. Joseph E. Johnson, President of the Carnegie Foundation, offered a series of recommendations which are similar to mine.

Above all nations is humanity. All problems where humanity is involved can be resolved if the emphasis is placed where it belongs—on the people. If former sworn enemies and rivals on both sides of the Atlantic Ocean, both sides of the Rhine and on both sides of the English Channel can come together under the banner of economic cooperation, it can happen also on both sides of the Jordan and the Suez. I am convinced that there are no political problems, no matter how intricate and ingrained, that cannot be settled in the healthy atmosphere of a sound economy based on an equitable distribution of natural wealth. With patience, courage and generosity, the Middle Eastern nations, with our help and guidance, will achieve peace and stability.

Chapter XXV

Once, after a long and arduous rehearsal of the NBC Symphony Orchestra, Arturo Toscanini, exhausted but beaming with evident self-satisfaction, turned to me with shining eyes and asked: "Did you hear my silences?"

How eloquent, indeed, had been the quiet that followed his mounting crescendos and crashing chords! Quick and transitory but deeply felt, these brief suspensions in space are not unlike the immensity of the chasm of quiet which opens up following a peal of thunder.

Just as the Maestro treasured these "spaces" in his music, I continue to search for a comparable serenity as the priceless reward of the truly realized man. While I can offer no formula for its fulfillment, I know that the prize is worth the seeking.

As a nation, we are committed to one of the most challenging races in the history of man . . . to be the first explorers of outer space and its manifold mysteries. It is an exciting chase. Scientists, daring airmen and billions of dollars are assigned to pursue that end. In passing, may one small voice speak up for the world of *inner space?*

I refer to the emptiness inside ourselves, the deepening void that grows in hollowness as we intensify our scramble for position and possessions. It is to these vast open spaces that I address myself. It is for the filling of these arid emptinesses—not with the tangibles but with satisfactions from inner meanings, sympathy and love—that I plead.

It is in this introspective approach to building a life of usefulness and fulfillment that I have offered my unorthodox career, not as a model or guide, but as an example of how one man found greater satisfaction in the achievement of his goals by following a series of untrodden paths rather than relying on the mythical security of the established course.

I was launched in the business world and before I was fully mature it had become "big business." I have no quarrel with this world, nor do I look upon success or the accumulation of wealth in any sense as immoral. But in my personal quest for serenity, I have become convinced that a blessed instinct for self-preservation saved me from total submersion in the vortex of big business. Instead, a constant forward movement in varying fields—sometimes so violent that it has mystified even people who know me intimately—has been the hallmark of the career chronicled in part in these pages.

I like to think that my career with its many turns, tests, trials and adventures is a living denial of the success image created by the late Horatio Alger and perpetuated by the shrill voice of Madison Avenue. Certainly it belies the garden variety of shining formulae for winning power, money and fame. But I hasten to emphasize that the quick changes were not mere digressions or accidental detours. My philosophy, if you will, was and still is the deliberate avoidance of the perilous pitfall of the success cliché.

If there is any moving force in the numerous areas covered,

it is an irresistible gravitation toward bold, affirmative action, whether in business, banking or merchandising—but especially in human and international affairs.

After three decades in business, in capacities ranging from office boy to chairman of major corporations, it is my firm conviction that the popular American conception of success has resulted too often in the strangulation of the male personality. It has depersonalized men into syndicated types with little time and energy for the essential development of their God-given individuality and self-esteem.

If anything, the wide range of my participation in business has made me an eyewitness to the tragedy of businessmen and executives eating themselves up—a modern variety of cannibalism. It has been revealing to me to watch the frenzied and endless search for personal happiness among so many of my friends who have made their millions. However trite it may seem, it is nevertheless true that they are repeatedly stunned and hurt by their frustration in being unable to buy happiness with their money.

James Thurber created an unforgettable American legend when he wrote of the imaginary adventures of the Everyman of our society. But Walter Mitty is more than an amusing fellow. He is a symbol of too many Americans fighting lonely battles for self-assurance and meaningful triumphs. I could borrow from a long list of terms coined to label this frustration—"merry-go-round," "rat race," "beat the game." But where does the benefit lie in derogatory terms or well-worded epithets if there is lacking the courage to step off the merry-go-round or out of the rat race? Why should America, the richest country in the history of the world, revolve on a stage where many of the main actors admit they are playing in a mad scene?

Without the element of love, no work is creative. Without some element of the creative, no work is fruitful. This applies equally to bricklaying, copywriting, gardening, plumbing, diplomacy or to running a bank. Or, for that matter, to any form of work.

Sooner or later, most work calls for change. Let others laud single-mindedness. I am thoroughly committed to *double-mindedness,* by which I mean a sublime blend of action and dream, introspection and adventure. It takes special wisdom as well as courage to know when to discontinue a piece of work, but I am for leaving it when it has lost its creative challenge. Ernest Hemingway packed a world of wisdom into a few words when he said, "Don't do one thing too bloody long."

And so if this traveler stopped in his path to hear the secret, to turn from copywriting to music-making, from department store to the diplomatic corps, from printed word to radio, from earphones to television, from one chamber music piece to the New Friends of Music, from making speeches against Hitler to chartering boatloads of lost children across the Bosporus, do not, I beg, ascribe it to wanderlust, restless compulsion or even a talent for leaving business in time *not* to make a million dollars.

Rather, I am hopeful that some reader will have seen in my way of life the joys of curiosity satisfied, have heard in it the sound of music that would not be muffled, sensed in it the flight of imagination that would not be fettered. Perhaps he will also perceive a propensity for being drawn to men like Brandeis and Schnabel, La Guardia and Toscanini, Lubin and Roosevelt—who offered wisdom and who encouraged ventures into the world of the unknown.

Typically, this chronicle ends with a piece of unfinished

business. At this writing I am steeped in the complexities of a vast rehabilitation project for the pacification of the Middle East. This seems to be the pattern of my existence—to be involved with all the moral strength I possess, where my spirit has driven into some area dealing with the security and dignity of the individual.

This, in the main, has been a story of nonconformity. It is my story, but it also covers a tiny segment of the history of a country whose greatness could be measured in the aims and achievements of its nonconformists. America was conceived and given strength by men and women who dared to break out of the molds of European society. The history of our nation is replete with stories of leaders and social reformers who deserted the ranks of the privileged.

The spirit which nurtured them still flourishes. My own career can perhaps be described as a microcosm of what our free society makes possible. For with all our ponderous growth, prodigious wealth, and the complexities of the vast machinery of our government, there is still youthful resiliency, open-minded flexibility and a door which will open to anyone with the instinct to sense those magical moments when one does not hesitate to throw caution to the winds.

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